

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions

This guidance document will continue to be updated as the COVID-19 situation evolves. Visit www.coronavirusnetwork.org for the latest information, updates and resources.

What is the coronavirus?

Coronavirus is a type of virus that causes illness ranging from a common cold to more severe lung problems. There are many types of coronaviruses. There is a new (novel) type of coronavirus that is spreading around the world. It has been given the name COVID-19. Other names you may hear for the new coronavirus are SARS-CoV-2 or 2019-nCoV.

What are coronavirus symptoms?

The most common symptoms for coronavirus are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. People might have aches and pains, stuffy or runny nose, sore throat, and diarrhea. Some people can have coronavirus but show no symptoms at all. Most cases are mild with a fever and cough. Most people won't need to go to the hospital. You can get better at home. If you have trouble breathing you might need to go to the hospital.

Is the coronavirus like the flu?

While some of the symptoms of the flu and coronavirus are the same, it is generally not helpful to compare the two. The flu vaccine does not protect you from coronavirus but will protect you from the flu.

How contagious is coronavirus and how can I get it?

The coronavirus is very contagious meaning it spreads from one person to another easily. It is passed from one person to another by "droplets" that come from someone's cough or sneeze. Droplets from a cough or sneeze can travel six feet and can survive on surfaces for a number of hours. You get the coronavirus when you come into contact with the droplets directly, or the droplets get on your hands and then you touch your face, including your eyes.

Help! I think I have coronavirus! What should I do?

If you have mild symptoms and you are breathing OK, stay somewhere that you can recover comfortably, like your home. Use over the counter cold medicines, drink plenty of fluids and get a lot of rest. People with mild cases should not attend work and should limit contact with others. If your symptoms do not go away, start to get worse, or you become concerned, contact your primary care provider. If you get really sick and have difficulty breathing, then get to the hospital.

While the availability of tests for coronavirus are improving, at the moment getting tested for is not easy. If you have recently traveled to a place where there is a known outbreak of coronavirus or you have been in contact with someone who you know has coronavirus, then it is a good idea to try and get tested. Call your health care provider for help on where to get tested. Most people can get better at home and it is best to avoid spreading it to more people.

Who is most likely to get severe coronavirus?

As of now it looks like older people and those with other chronic health problems are getting the sickest. If you think you might have a mild case or have come into contact with someone with coronavirus, it is best to avoid being with people over the age of 70, people with lung diseases and people that have weak immune systems such as someone going through cancer treatment. So far children and young people are more likely to get mild cases.

How deadly is the coronavirus?

We do not know for sure how deadly the coronavirus is. Right now, the best guess is about 1% - 4% of people who get sick will die. The virus is more deadly for older people and people with chronic health problems. Since many cases can be mild or show no symptoms, then this can make the death rate higher since only the worst cases get diagnosed.

How can I prevent getting coronavirus?

The most practical way is washing your hands with soap regularly and avoiding touching your face, especially when out in public. When you wash your hands it should be for at least twenty seconds, and get both sides as well as under your nails. If someone you know is sick with symptoms, you can keep your distance unless there is a reason to be close to them. If you need to care for someone who is sick or you must travel to public places, be alert and limit touching.

Should I buy a mask to prevent getting coronavirus?

In general, masks will not reduce the chances of you getting coronavirus. That is because most people do not wear masks properly and may think they are safe when they need to be cautious. When you adjust and take on/off a mask you are putting yourself at risk of getting the virus. Masks are helpful if someone has coronavirus and does not want to give it to others. Face masks are very important to health workers who are taking care of patients who have coronavirus. Therefore, unless you have or are taking care of someone who has coronavirus, you do not really need a mask.

What should I do if I think a family member has coronavirus?

If a loved one gets sick, contact your health provider for advice. Try to have them wear a face mask. That may be hard because masks are hard to find right now. If you can, keep the person away from others, especially those that are older or have health problems. Make sure that he/she washes their hands a lot, and covers their mouth when sneezing or coughing. If possible, have your family member use their own bedroom and bathroom separately from the rest of the family.

What can I do if I'm worried and anxious about coronavirus?

It is good to be thinking about how you can protect yourself and your family and know what is happening around you. You can be prepared by getting a few months worth of any prescription

medications you might need. Stocking up on two weeks worth of food and supplies per person in your household is a good idea.

Information for this FAQ came from:

US Center for Disease Control (CDC):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

The World Health Organization (WHO): <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

Breanna Lathrop, DNP, MPH, FNP-BC: <https://goodsamatlanta.org/team/breanna-lathrop/>

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Brenda Goodman, reporter: <https://www.webmd.com/brenda-goodman>

Michael Mina, MD, PhD: <https://ccdd.hsph.harvard.edu/people/michael-mina/>

Isaac Bogoch, MD, SM, FRCPC: <https://www.uhnresearch.ca/researcher/isaac-bogoch>

Carlos del Rio, MD: http://vaccines.emory.edu/faculty-evc/primary-faculty/del_rio_carlos.html

This FAQ was written by the Coronavirus Support Network, a project of Sostento Inc. a US based 501c3 federally recognized nonprofit. To join the network visit www.coronavirusnetwork.org.

