

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

March 5, 2020

What are coronaviruses? Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses; a coronavirus causes the common cold. Newer human coronaviruses, like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) & COVID-19 can cause more severe symptoms. Person-to-person spread is occurring with COVID-19.

How is it spread? It's not clear yet how easily COVID-19 spreads. Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through respiratory droplets, including:

- Through the air by coughing and sneezing;
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands;
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

This is similar to how influenza and other respiratory infections spread. Healthcare providers may wear special personal protective equipment (e.g. masks and eye protection) when evaluating a patient if there is concern for infection with the COVID-19.

What are the symptoms? We are still learning about COVID-19. Symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Symptoms have primarily included:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

If you have traveled to/from a Level 2 or 3 country and develop symptoms of a fever or respiratory illness within 14 days of your travel, contact your health care provider before going to their office or the emergency department, and tell them about your recent travel and symptoms. **For current information and travel advisories, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.**

How can I protect myself and others? There are steps you can take to reduce your risk and prevent transmitting infections:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces
- Stay home from work or school if you have a fever or are not feeling well

Is there a treatment? There are no specific treatments recommended for infection with the COVID-19. People infected with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms, such as taking pain or fever medications, drinking plenty of fluids, and staying home and resting. Some patients who are very sick may need to go to the hospital to get care.

People who think they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their health care provider immediately. Contact your health care provider before going to their office.