

What you need to know about COVID-19

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a new disease that causes respiratory illness in people and can spread from person to person. People of all ages can be infected. Older adults and people with pre-existing medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, and heart disease may be more likely to become severely ill if infected. Many details about this disease are still unknown, such as treatment options, how the virus works, the total impact of the illness, and many other factors.

What is the coronavirus?

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that is caused by a new virus called a coronavirus, which has become a public health emergency. The number of cases continues to increase nationally and globally.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of coronavirus include mild to severe respiratory symptoms. Symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath, and lower respiratory illness. COVID-19 can be contagious before a person begins showing symptoms.

What else causes similar symptoms?

Influenza (the flu), a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza viruses (Type A and Type B), has high activity in the United States at this time. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine.

I may have symptoms.

What do I do?

If you have been exposed or begin showing symptoms of the virus or flu, contact your healthcare provider or health department immediately.

Protect yourself and your community.

We all have a role to play in protecting our communities and families from the spread of coronavirus. It is similar to other communicable viruses. You can also follow these tips to prevent infection:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently. Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizing rub (must contain at least 60 percent alcohol).
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze by coughing/sneezing into your elbow.
- Avoid touching your face unless you have just washed your hands.
- Promptly dispose of tissues in a wastebasket after use.
- Clean public surfaces thoroughly before touching them.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid shaking hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Get a flu vaccine.

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Are there strategies for coping with the COVID-19 outbreak?

Worry and anxiety about the potential spread of COVID-19 and for the well-being of friends and family is natural.

- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
- Connect with others. Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships and a sense of hope and positive thinking.
- If you plan to discuss reports about COVID-19, be certain that the information is coming from reliable

sources such as the National Institutes of Health or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It is important to share accurate information and to not unnecessarily increase anxiety in yourself or others.

- People who have returned from areas of ongoing spread more than 14 days ago and do not have symptoms of COVID-19 do not put others at risk.
- For more information, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html)

For more information, including travel advisories, please visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Need Help?

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TTY users call 711.

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