

CORONAVIRUS

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated March 13, 2020

BACKGROUND



WHAT IS COVID-19

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

HOW LONG CAN COVID-19 SURVIVE ON SURFACES?

It is not certain how long the virus that causes COVID-19 survives on surfaces, but it seems to behave like other coronaviruses. Studies suggest that coronaviruses (including preliminary information on the COVID-19 virus) may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. This may vary under different conditions (e.g., type of surface, temperature, or humidity of the environment). If you think a surface may be infected, clean it with a disinfectant to kill the virus and protect yourself and others.

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF COVID-19 IN THE UNITED STATES?

The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.



SYMPTOMS



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- **Fever**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath**

Symptoms usually appear 2-14 days after exposure.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE SHORTNESS OF BREATH?

Shortness of breath – known medically as dyspnea – is often described as a tightening in the chest, or breathlessness. Normally, shortness of breath accompanies a tough workout or a stressful day, but if you have shortness of breath while resting or lying down, it can be a sign that medical help is needed.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COVID-19 AND INFLUENZA?

The symptoms related to influenza (The Flu) and COVID-19 (Coronavirus) are very similar and can be indistinguishable. Symptoms of both include fever, cough, body aches, and fatigue. Influenza typically has a mortality rate of 0.1 percent in the United States. The mortality rate of COVID-19 is significantly higher, especially in older patients and those with preexisting conditions, like diabetes, respiratory issues, and weakened immune systems. Vaccines and anti-viral treatments exist for influenza, but no vaccines or anti-viral treatments currently exist for coronavirus. Contact your physician for help diagnosing your condition.

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HOW SHOULD I PROTECT MYSELF AND MY FAMILY?

Common-sense measures can help minimize the chances of exposure. (1) Avoid close contact with people who are sick. (2) Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. (3) Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. (4) Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



PREVENTION



SHOULD I WEAR A FACE MASK?

Facemasks are not necessary for healthy individuals. However, people showing symptoms of COVID-19 should use a facemask to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. Follow the [CDC's recommendations for using a facemask](#) and other preventive measures. The use of facemasks is crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings.

SHOULD I TRAVEL ON A PLANE?

The [CDC has provided recommendations](#) on postponing or canceling travel to certain areas. If anyone has a fever and respiratory symptoms, that person should not fly, if possible.



SEEKING CARE



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE COVID-19?

Seek the advice of a healthcare professional if you develop symptoms and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with an ongoing spread of COVID-19.

MDLIVE virtual visits are a good option. Our doctors are trained on the latest CDC guidance for providers and can assess your symptoms and risk factors to determine appropriate next steps.

Before seeking in-person care for COVID-19 symptoms, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

IS THERE A TREATMENT FOR COVID-19?

There is no specific anti-viral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms and minimize the risk of additional health complications.

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