Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Share Facts, Not Fear

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

For up-to-date information, visit CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 situation summary page.

**FACT 1**

Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

People of Asian descent, including Chinese Americans, are not more likely to get COVID-19 than any other American. Help stop fear by letting people know that being of Asian descent does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.

**FACT 2**

The risk of getting COVID-19 in the U.S. is currently low.

Some people who have traveled to places where many people have gotten sick with COVID-19 may be monitored by health officials to protect their health and the health of other people in the community.

**FACT 3**

Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

**FACT 4**

You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Seek medical advice if you have traveled to China in the past 14 days and feel sick. Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.

**FACT 5**

There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.


2/27/2020
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How COVID-19 Spreads
Current understanding about how the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spreads is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses.

Person-to-person spread
The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet)
- Via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects
It 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.

When does spread happen?

- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

How efficiently does the virus spread?

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (like measles), while other viruses are less so. Another factor is whether the spread continues over multiple generations of people (if spread is sustained). The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in Hubei province and other parts of China. In the United States, spread from person-to-person has occurred only among a few close contacts and has not spread any further to date.

There is still more to be learned

COVID-19 is an emerging disease and there is more to learn about its transmissibility, severity, and other features and what will happen in the United States. New information will further inform the risk assessment.

Read the latest Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), Wuhan, China situation summary.
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Symptoms
For confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases, reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

CDC believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure. This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of MERS-CoV viruses.

The latest situation summary updates are available on CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) web page.
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Prevention & Treatment

Prevention

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask.
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

For information about handwashing, see CDC’s Handwashing website

For information specific to healthcare, see CDC’s Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings

These are everyday habits that can help prevent the spread of several viruses. CDC does have specific guidance for travelers.

Treatment

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.

People who think they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

See Interim Guidance for Healthcare Professionals for information on persons under investigation.
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What to Do If You Are Sick With Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after travel from China, you should call ahead to a healthcare professional and mention your recent travel or close contact. If you have had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from this area, you should call ahead to a healthcare professional and mention your close contact and their recent travel. Your healthcare professional will work with your state’s public health department and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

Information for Travelers from China Arriving in the United States

Information for household members, intimate partners, and caregivers of a person with COVID-19

Steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

People: As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Animals: You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. If you are sick with COVID-19, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask. See COVID-19 and Animals for more information.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor
If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

**Wear a facemask**

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

**Cover your coughs and sneezes**

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

**Clean your hands often**

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

**Avoid sharing personal household items**

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

**Clean all “high-touch” surfaces everyday**

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

**Monitor your symptoms**

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, 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. Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department. Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

**Discontinuing home isolation**
Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

Footnote

¹Fever may be subjective or confirmed

²Close contact is defined as—

1. a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case

   or

   1. b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

If such contact occurs while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment or PPE (e.g., gowns, gloves, NIOSH-certified disposable N95 respirator, eye protection), criteria for PUI consideration are met¹


Data to inform the definition of close contact are limited. Considerations when assessing close contact include the duration of exposure (e.g., longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk) and the clinical symptoms of the person with COVID-19 (e.g., coughing likely increases exposure risk as does exposure to a severely ill patient). Special consideration should be given to those exposed in health care settings.

Page last reviewed: February 25, 2020

Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD). Division of Viral Diseases
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Stigma Related to COVID-19

The risk of getting coronavirus disease 2019 is currently low in the U.S. due in part to quick action from health authorities. However, some people are worried about the disease. Fear and anxiety can lead to social stigma towards Chinese or other Asian Americans. Stigma and discrimination can occur when people associate an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, with a population or nationality, even though not everyone in that population or from that region is specifically at risk for the disease (for example, Chinese-Americans and other Asian-Americans living in the United States).

Stigma hurts everyone by creating more fear or anger towards ordinary people instead of the disease that is causing the problem. We can fight stigma and help not hurt others by providing social support. We can communicate the facts that being Chinese or Asian American does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.

People—including those of Asian descent—who have not recently traveled to China or been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 are not at greater risk of acquiring and spreading COVID-19 than other Americans.

- Viruses cannot target people from specific populations, ethnicities, or racial backgrounds.
- People from China in the U.S. may be worried or anxious about friends and relatives who are living in the region. Facing stigma can make fear and anxiety worsen. Social support during this outbreak can help them cope.

People who have returned from China more than 14 days ago and do not have symptoms are not infected with the virus and contact with them will not give you the virus.

- People who have traveled to areas where the COVID-19 outbreak is happening to help have performed a valuable service to everyone by helping make sure this disease does not spread further.
- Helping fight an outbreak can be mentally and emotionally challenging. These helpers need social support upon their return.
- The U.S. government has taken unprecedented steps related to travel in response to the growing public health threat posed by this new coronavirus, including suspending entry in the United States of foreign nationals who have visited China within the past 14 days. Measures to detect this virus among those who are allowed entry into the United States (U.S. citizens, residents and family) who have been in China within 14 days also are being implemented.

Communicators and public health officials can help counter stigma during the COVID-19 response.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality of those seeking health care and those who may be part of any contact investigation.
- Timely communication of the risk or lack of risk from associations with products, people, and places.
- Raise awareness about COVID-19 without increasing fear.
- Share accurate information about how the virus spreads.
- Speak out against negative behaviors, including negative statements on social media about groups of people, or exclusion of people who pose no risk from regular activities.
- Be cautious about the images that are shared. Make sure they do not reinforce stereotypes.
- Engage with stigmatized groups in person and through media channels including news media and social media.
- Share the need for social support for people who have returned from China or are worried about friends or relatives in the affected region.

Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases

Page last reviewed: February 21, 2020
Other human coronaviruses

5. MERS-CoV (the beta coronavirus that causes Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, or MERS)
6. SARS-CoV (the beta coronavirus that causes severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS)
7. SARS-CoV-2 (the novel coronavirus that causes coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19)

People around the world commonly get infected with human coronaviruses 229E, NL63, OC43, and HKU1.

Sometimes coronaviruses that infect animals can evolve and make people sick and become a new human coronavirus. Three recent examples of this are 2019-nCoV, SARS-CoV, and MERS-CoV.