

# COVID-19 Outbreak

COVID-19, an illness caused by a newly identified type of coronavirus, can cause a respiratory infection and lead to health problems. It's usually mild and most people recover quickly if they have it, but it can be very serious for people with stressed immune systems or underlying conditions or older adults, so it's important to stay informed.

The most important thing is to be prepared and knowing what to do will help you. Even if you don't see a widespread COVID-19 outbreak in your area, the hand-washing and other prevention actions described here are good practices for fighting off bugs like the cold or the flu.

## How do people get infected with COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spread from person-to-person by coughing or sneezing and getting exposed to droplets that have the virus in them. There are no known risk factors that appear to make a person more or less vulnerable to getting infected with the virus. The main risk is close contact with someone who has it.



## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The main symptoms feel like the flu or a really bad cold:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Fatigue

These symptoms show up between 2 and 14 days after you've been exposed to the virus. People who are considered at increased risk include those with *underlying health conditions, including heart disease, lung disease such as asthma/COPD, diabetes, or HIV, or people who are immunocompromised, or over age 60.*



## How can I prevent COVID-19?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer—it must have at least 60% alcohol in it—can also kill the virus.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue and throw it away in a lined trash can, or if you don't have a tissue, cough into the bend in your elbow. Wash hands with soap and water afterwards.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Social distancing (elbow touch hello) and avoid large crowds
- Get a flu shot. It won't prevent COVID-19 but it will prevent the flu and keep you out of clinics, pharmacies, or emergency departments and minimize your risk of contact with others who may be sick.
- When helping someone who is sick, wear gloves and a safe mask to minimize the risk of body fluids that may have COVID-19 from getting into you. Wash your hands before you put on gloves and after you take them off.



## If I'm feeling sick, what should I do?

- Stay home if you are sick, and if you don't have a place to stay, try to minimize your close contact with other people. Monitor your fever at home and avoid others for at least 24 hours after the last fever and all other symptoms have subsided. If you have to be around other people, this is the time to wear a safe mask if you have one, so that you don't cough on them and transmit a virus. If you self-quarantine, attend to your mental health and ensure you have as much support as you can get (emotional support, food, hygiene, medications, finances).
- Call or contact a medical provider if you can to ask about your symptoms and see if you need to even come in. Tell them your symptoms and that you are concerned about COVID-19.
- If you feel like your symptoms have become severe call or contact a medical provider or go to urgent care or the emergency department.
- Right now, there is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 and no specific medicine to treat it. There are still good things a medical provider can do for you and it's important to check you out if you're sick and not getting better.