PREVENTION TIPS FOR TRAVELERS

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in China and which has now been detected in more than 100 locations internationally, including in the United States. The virus has been named "SARS-CoV-2" and the disease it causes has been named "coronavirus disease 2019" (abbreviated "COVID-19").

On January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern" (PHEIC). On January 31, 2020, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency (PHE) for the United States to aid the nation's healthcare community in responding to COVID-19.

UNDERSTAND THE SYMPTOMS

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS & HOW LONG UNTIL THEY MAY APPEAR?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and may begin to mildly appear 2-14 days after exposure. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. People with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention.

CAN COVID-19 BE CAUGHT FROM A PERSON WHO PRESENTS NO SYMPTOMS?

The main way the disease spreads is through respiratory droplets expelled by someone who is coughing. The risk of catching COVID-19 from someone with no symptoms at all is very low. However, many people with COVID-19 experience only mild symptoms. This is particularly true at the early stages of the disease. It is therefore possible to catch COVID-19 from someone who has, for example, just a mild cough and does not feel ill. WHO is assessing ongoing research on the period of transmission of COVID-19 and will continue to share updated findings.

TAKE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

HOW CAN TRAVELERS PREVENT EXPOSURE OR TRANSMISSION?

Although the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to COVID-19, the WHO offers the following basic protective measures against the new coronavirus.

- Stay aware of the latest information on the COVID-19 outbreak, available on the WHO website and through your national and local public health authority. Many countries around the world have seen cases of COVID-19 and several have seen outbreaks. Authorities in China and some other countries have succeeded in slowing or stopping their outbreaks. However, the situation is unpredictable so check regularly for the latest news.
- You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:
  - Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
  - Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
  - Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
  - Why? When someone coughs or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which
may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease.

- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
  Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.

- Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.
  Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

- Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.
  Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.

**WHEN SHOULD TRAVELERS WEAR MASKS?**

According to the WHO, if you are healthy, you only need to wear a mask if you are ill with COVID-19 symptoms (especially coughing) or looking after someone who may have COVID-19. Disposable face mask can only be used once. If you are not ill or looking after someone who is ill then you are wasting a mask.

There is a world-wide shortage of masks, so WHO urges people to use masks wisely. WHO advises rational use of medical masks to avoid unnecessary wastage of precious resources and mis-use of masks.

The most effective ways to protect yourself and others against COVID-19 are to frequently clean your hands, cover your cough with the bend of elbow or tissue and maintain a distance of at least 1 meter (3 feet) from people who are coughing or sneezing.

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN TO A HIGH-RISK AREA & EXHIBIT SYMPTOMS**

**WHAT MEASURES SHOULD TRAVELERS TAKE IF THEY HAVE VISITED A HIGH-RISK AREA IN THE LAST 14 DAYS AND EXHIBIT SYMPTOMS?**

If a traveler has been to a high-risk area in the last 14 days and feels sick with fever, cough or has difficulty breathing, the traveler should:

- Seek medical care right away. Before visiting a doctor’s office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about the recent travel and symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Do not travel while sick.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
DISCLAIMER

All information contained in this document was sourced from the World Health Organization or US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention website and was accurate at the time of publication. As this is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, the CDC and WHO websites linked below are the best sources for the most up-to-date information and guidance.

RESOURCES

US CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION


On this website you can find information and guidance from the CDC regarding the current outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19); please visit this page for daily updates.

FURTHER INFORMATION & RESOURCES

- What You Need to Know About COVID-19
- About COVID-19
- News
- Information for Travelers
- Risk Assessment
- Cases: United States, Global

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

On this website you can find information and guidance from the WHO regarding the current outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19); please visit this page for daily updates.

FURTHER INFORMATION & RESOURCES

- Protect Yourself
- Questions & Answers
- Myth-Busters
- Travel Advice
- Situation Reports