SYMPTOMS & TREATMENT

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.

OVERVIEW

- Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath.
- Older adults and travelers with pre-existing health issues may be at risk for more severe disease.
- No vaccine or specific treatment for the COVID-19 infection is available; care is supportive.

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.

RISK & COMPLICATIONS

WHO CAN CATCH THIS VIRUS?

For most people in most locations the risk of catching COVID-19 is still low. However, there are now places around the world (high-risk areas) where the disease is spreading. For people living in, or visiting, these areas the risk of catching COVID-19 is higher. Governments and health authorities are taking vigorous action every time a new case of COVID-19 is identified. Be sure to comply with any local restrictions on travel, movement or large gatherings. Cooperating with disease control efforts will reduce your risk of catching or spreading COVID-19.

COVID-19 outbreaks can be contained and transmission stopped, as has been shown in China and some other countries. Unfortunately, new outbreaks can emerge rapidly. It's important to be aware of the situation where you are or intend to go. WHO publishes daily updates on the COVID-19 situation worldwide.
WHO IS AT RISK OF DEVELOPING SEVERE ILLNESS?

While the WHO is still learning about how COVID-2019 affects people, older persons and persons with pre-existing medical conditions (such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes) appear to develop serious illness more often than others.

TESTING

WHO SHOULD BE TESTED FOR COVID-19?

If you develop symptoms such as fever, cough, and/or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19, stay home and call your healthcare provider. Older patients and individuals who have severe underlying medical conditions or are immunocompromised should contact their healthcare provider early, even if their illness is mild. If you have severe symptoms, such as persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, or bluish lips of face, contact your healthcare provider or emergency room and seek care immediately. Your doctor will determine if you have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and whether you should be tested.

HOW IS A PERSON TESTED FOR COVID-19?

At this time, diagnostic testing for COVID-19 can be conducted only at the CDC.

The CDC has developed a new laboratory test kit for use in testing patient specimens for 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The test kit is called the “Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2019-Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Real-Time Reverse Transcriptase (RT)-PCR Diagnostic Panel.”

The CDC is shipping the test kits to laboratories the CDC has designated as qualified, including US state and local public health laboratories, Department of Defense (DOD) laboratories and select international laboratories. The test kits are bolstering global laboratory capacity for detecting COVID-19.

CAN A PERSON TEST NEGATIVE AND LATER TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

Using the CDC-developed diagnostic test, a negative result means that the virus that causes COVID-19 was not found in the person’s sample. In the early stages of infection, it is possible the virus will not be detected.

For COVID-19, a negative test result for a sample collected while a person has symptoms likely means that the COVID-19 virus is not causing their current illness.

TREATMENT

WHAT TREATMENT IS AVAILABLE?

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19, nor is there a vaccine. People infected 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. Some specific treatments are under investigation and will be tested through clinical trials. The WHO is helping to coordinate efforts to develop medicines to treat COVID-19 with a range of partners.
DISCLAIMER

All information contained in this document was sourced from the World Health Organization or US Center of Disease Control 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