

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

1. How does the virus spread?

This virus was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The first infections were linked to a live animal market, but the virus is now spreading from person-to-person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some viruses are highly contagious (like measles), while other viruses are less so.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community ("community spread") in some affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

2. How can I protect myself?

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.

These are everyday habits that can help prevent the spread of several viruses.

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.

3. Does the CDC recommend the use of masks in the community to prevent COVID-19?

CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected. The use of facemasks also is crucial for health workers and other people who are taking care of someone infected with COVID-19 in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

4. What are the symptoms and complications that COVID-19 can cause?

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases. The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure - Fever, Cough, Shortness of breath.

5. Should I be tested for COVID-19?

Call your healthcare professional if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or if you live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. 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.

6. If I have flu-like symptoms, what should I do?

If you aren't feeling well, the best advice is to stay home and rest. Drink plenty of clear fluids. If symptoms persist or worsen, call your primary care physician or other health care provider. Consider urgent care centers if necessary, but avoid going to emergency departments—which are historically busy this time of year—unless your symptoms worsen and you have no other options to receive care. If you have not traveled to China or other affected areas and you have no other risk factors, you probably have the flu, not COVID-19.