

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)



What is novel coronavirus?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a virus strain that was first detected in December 2019 and has now been detected in almost 90 locations internationally and in the many states in the U.S. The virus, while having mild effects in most people, can cause severe illness and pneumonia in others such as the elderly or those with underlying medical conditions.

How does COVID-19 spread?

Health experts are still learning the details about how COVID-19 spreads from person to person. The most recent evidence points to infected people coughing and sneezing within six feet of a non-infected person. Other methods of transmission may include:

- close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes
- in rare cases, contact with feces

How severe is COVID-19?

Upwards of 80% of those infected recover after mild symptoms. Others, especially the elderly and those with serious chronic medical conditions, may experience more severe symptoms including pneumonia that requires hospitalization, and sometimes death.

What are the symptoms?

People who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus:



Who is at risk for COVID-19?

Currently the risk to the general public for COVID-19 to cause severe illness is low. At this time, there are a small number of individual cases in the U.S. Older adults and those with serious conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, lung disease and any condition that affects the immune system could be at higher risk. Additionally, travelers to and from certain areas of the world may be at increased risk. See wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel for the latest travel guidance from the CDC.

How can I prevent from getting COVID-19?

Practicing correct handwashing skills along with avoiding touching your face can protect you from COVID-19 and many other viruses. See <https://youtu.be/d914EnpU4Fo> for a quick review of proper handwashing techniques. There is currently no vaccine for COVID-19. To reduce risk of other respiratory infections, especially the flu, you can help protect yourself and others by getting a flu vaccine. Everyday precautions range from avoiding close contact with people who are sick to avoiding touching high-touch surfaces in public such as elevator buttons, door handles, handrails and handshakes. Other steps include:

- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others
- cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing



CDC continues to stress concerns with international travel. Currently CDC recommends avoiding non essential travel to China, Iran, South Korea, Italy. Travel to Japan is a concern for older adults or those with chronic medical conditions. See wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel for the latest travel guidance from the CDC.

What do I do if I have symptoms?

Influenza and other respiratory infections including COVID-19 have similar if not identical signs and symptoms. Individuals who think they are sick or are getting sick should NOT report to work. Individuals should monitor for cough, shortness of breath, and fever and should practice social distancing to avoid the spread of any illness they may have. Individuals experiencing the described symptoms AND have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 should contact their health care provider by phone. Supply information about symptoms and when and how they had contact with a confirmed case. The health care provider may either suggest testing via a commercial lab or involve public health resources. Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms who are a contact to a case should not arrive at a health care provider or emergency room without contacting the provider or emergency room first.

How is COVID-19 treated?

There are no medications specifically approved for COVID-19. Most people with mild coronavirus illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. However, some cases develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.

For more information: www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus

Updated 3/9/2020

