

# COVID-19 Information

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It has spread from China to many other countries around the world, including the United States. Infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can cause illness ranging from mild to severe and, in some cases, can be fatal.

## Symptoms of COVID-19

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update their list as we learn more about COVID-19.

- Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms.
- Other people, referred to as asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all.
- Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

## How COVID-19 Spreads

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person. Some people *without* symptoms may be able to spread the virus. We are still learning about how the virus spreads and the severity of illness it causes.

### Person-to-person spread:

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading very easily and sustainably between people. Information from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic suggest that this virus is spreading more efficiently than influenza, but not as efficiently as measles, which is highly contagious.

The virus may be spread in other ways:

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads, but we are still learning more about how this virus spreads.

How long can the coronavirus stay airborne:

A study done by National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases' Laboratory of Virology in the Division of Intramural Research in Hamilton, Montana helps to answer this question. The researchers used a nebulizer to blow coronaviruses into the air. They found that infectious viruses could remain in the air for up to three hours.

How long can the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 survive on surfaces:

A recent study found that the COVID-19 coronavirus can survive up to four hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard, and up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel.

There's a lot we still don't know, such as how different conditions, such as exposure to sunlight, heat, or cold, can affect these survival times.

## **Protect yourself and others**

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. You can take steps to slow the spread.

- Maintain good social distance (about 6 feet). This is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering when around others.

Monitor Your Health:

Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19. (See symptom list on page 1)

- Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.
- Take your temperature if symptoms develop.
  - Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.

(Based on what we know about COVID-19, we believe pregnant people appear to have the same risk of COVID-19 as adults who are not pregnant. However, much remains unknown. We do know that pregnant people have had a higher risk of severe illness when infected with viruses that are similar to COVID-19, as well as other viral respiratory infections, such as influenza. We also know that pregnant people have changes in their bodies that may increase their risk of some infections. Therefore, if you are pregnant, it is always important for you to try to protect yourself from illnesses whenever possible. CDC)

## **Infection control practices**

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol.
  - Key times to clean hands include:
    - Before and after work shifts
    - Before and after work breaks
    - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
    - After using the restroom
    - Before eating or preparing food
    - After putting on, touching, or removing masks
    - When hands are visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Practice good respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if sick.
- Recognize personal risk factors. Certain people, including older adults and those with underlying conditions such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, are at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19
- Practice social distancing by avoiding gatherings and maintaining distance (at least 6 feet) from others when possible.
- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects and surfaces.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Masks are required for entry to the building at this time. (Only exception - those under 2 years of age.) Masks may prevent the person wearing it from spreading respiratory droplets when talking, sneezing or coughing. If everyone wears a mask, the risk of exposure to COVID-19 can be reduced for our community.

- Masks only help if they are carefully put on (donned) and taken off (doffed.)
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, every time you touch the mask. This will help you avoid cross-contamination. (Don't defeat the whole purpose of wearing a mask by constantly touching it. If there are virus particles trapped on the outside of the mask, they'll get on your hands when you touch it.)
- Place mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin. Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face. Make sure you can breathe easily.
- Remove mask by grasping ear loops or head loops; avoid touching front of mask. For re-use, place mask with outer side facing down on a clean paper towel. Perform hand hygiene after removing. When re-donning, use care not to touch outside of mask. Perform hand hygiene after donning.
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing your face covering
- If your mask becomes damp (which it likely will), replace it if possible.
- Wash your cloth mask after each use, or at least daily. Wash in hot water, but if you can't, make sure to dry on a hot setting of your dryer.

Gloves: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has not recommended disposable gloves for anyone except health care workers and people who are caring for COVID-19 patients at home. Wearing gloves can increase the risk of unintentional cross contamination.

Gloves are available in the office work room if there are specific situations that you would wish to wear them.

To remove gloves:

- Reminder - the outside of gloves are considered contaminated!
- If your hands get contaminated during glove removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Using a gloved hand, grasp the palm area of the other gloved hand and peel off first glove
- Hold removed glove in gloved hand
- Slide fingers of ungloved hand under remaining glove at wrist and peel off second glove over first glove
- Discard gloves in a waste container



# How should I use Soap and Water or Hand Sanitizer

## How should I use?

### Soap and Water

- **Wet** your hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap.
- **Scrub** all surfaces of your hands, including the palms, backs, fingers, between your fingers, and under your nails. Keep scrubbing for 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song twice.
- **Rinse** your hands under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

### Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer

Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol, especially in schools and childcare facilities.

- **Apply.** Put enough product on hands to cover all surfaces.
- **Rub** hands together, until hands feel dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

**Note:** Do not rinse or wipe off the hand sanitizer before it's dry; it may not work as well against germs.



For more information, visit the CDC handwashing website, [www.cdc.gov/handwashing](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing).



## How Can I Tell the Difference Between COVID-19, the Flu, a Cold or Seasonal Allergies?

Symptoms	Coronavirus* (COVID-19) <small>Symptoms range from mild to severe</small>	Cold <small>Gradual onset of symptoms</small>	Flu <small>Abrupt onset of symptoms</small>	Seasonal Allergies <small>Abrupt onset of symptoms</small>
 Length of symptoms	7-25 days	Less than 14 days	7-14 days	Several weeks
 Cough	Common (usually dry)	Common (mild)	Common (usually dry)	Rare (usually dry unless it triggers asthma)
 Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No**	No**	No**
 Sneezing	No	Common	No	Common
 Runny or stuffy nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
 Sore throat	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes (usually mild)
 Fever	Common	Short fever period	Common	No
 Feeling tired and weak	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
 Headaches	Sometimes	Rare	Common	Sometimes (related to sinus pain)
 Body aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common	No
 Diarrhea	Sometimes	No	Sometimes for children	No
 Chills/ repeated shaking	Sometimes	No	Sometimes	No
 Loss of taste or smell	Sometimes	Rare	Rare	Rare

Your symptoms may vary. \*Information is still evolving. \*\*Allergies, colds and flus can all trigger asthma, which can lead to shortness of breath. COVID-19 is the only one associated with shortness of breath on its own.

Sources: Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.  
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