

## COVID-19 Basic Information And Facts

There is much misinformation on COVID-19 spread by social media and the rumor mill. Not only can this misinformation create panic, but it is also dangerous as proper prevention based on science and fact may not be used.

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

### What Is A Novel Coronavirus?

A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019, called COVID-19, is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

A diagnosis of coronavirus 229E, NL63, OC43, or HKU1 is not the same as a COVID-19 diagnosis. Patients with COVID-19 will be evaluated and cared for differently than patients with common coronavirus diagnosis.

### Putting COVID-19 Into Perspective

As COVID-19 is newly discovered much about the virus is unknown or unconfirmed and more is learned daily.

The currently mortality rate figures for COVID-19 maybe deceptively high as health officials say the number of those with the virus may be under-reported which could lower the mortality rate significantly.

There is currently a 3.4% mortality rate globally for COVID-19 versus a mortality rate for previous outbreaks of 9.6% for SARS, 34% for MERS, and 0.02% for Swine Flu. The mortality rate of the common flu this season is 0.1% in the US., which sounds low, but has caused 46,000 deaths this flu season. Thus, the common flu this season is 5 times deadlier than Swine Flu.

The concern with COVID-19 is it seems more contiguous than the common flu and more deadly.

### How Does COVID-19 Spread?

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person. The transmission is between people who are in close contact with one another, meaning within about 6 feet.

The transmission is through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby and possibly be inhaled into their lungs.

### **Can Someone Spread The Virus Without Being Sick?**

People with the virus are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic, meaning the sickest.

Some transmission might be possible before people show symptoms. There have been reports of this occurring with COVID-19. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

### **Can The Virus Spread From Contact With Contaminated Surfaces Or Objects?**

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. But this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

For safety until more is known, it should be assumed that the virus can be transmitted from contaminated surfaces or objects.

### **How Easily Does COVID-19 Spread?**

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person varies. Some viruses are highly contagious and spread easily like the measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained, spreading continually without stopping.

COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community in some geographic areas. This is called “community spread”. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

### **Who Is At Higher Risk?**

According to the World Health Organization, “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.”

Although most people infected with COVID-19 have mild symptoms, about one in five require hospitalization.

So far there have been no fatalities of children under age 9 and the highest number of deaths have occurred to those 80 or older.

## **What Are The Symptoms of COVID-19?**

The following symptoms may appear in 2-14 days after exposure.\*

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Just because you exhibit these symptoms does not mean you have COVID-19. All the normal illnesses are still out there, the common flu, colds, and pollen season is starting.

## **Reduce Your Risk Of Getting Sick**

- Clean your hands often and properly during the day.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place. 20 seconds is much longer than you think. Washing your hands does not kill germs. You are scrubbing the germs off and washing them away. Use a timer if needed.
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- As much as possible, avoid touching high use surfaces in public places such as elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, handshaking with people, etc. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hand or finger if you must touch something.
- Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.
- Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. For example: table tops, counters doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, and sinks
- Clean your cell phone several times a day. Realize that your hands touch surfaces with germs all day. Your hands then touch your cell phone, using apps, texting, etc., and you then place the cell phone next to your face when making calls.
- Avoid crowds, especially in poorly ventilated spaces. Your risk of exposure to respiratory viruses like COVID-19 may increase in crowded, closed-in settings with little air circulation if there are people in the crowd who are sick.
- Avoid all non-essential travel.
- You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home.