

## COVID-19 Basics

### Q: What is COVID-19?

A: COVID-19 is a virus strain, first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, that has only spread in people since December 2019.

Health experts are closely monitoring the situation because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

### Q: How does COVID-19 spread and what are the symptoms?

A: COVID-19 is primarily spread through respiratory droplets, which means to become infected, people generally must be within six feet of someone who is contagious and come into contact with these droplets. 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. Symptoms of COVID-19 appear within two to 14 days after exposure and include fever, cough, runny nose and difficulty breathing.

### Q: How long does it take for symptoms of the COVID-19 to appear?

A: Health experts believe that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as two days, or as long as 14 days after exposure. To be cautious, many governments are requiring an isolation period of 14 days for people returning from endemic areas

### Q: How is COVID-19 treated?

A: There is currently no approved medication for COVID-19. People infected with this virus should receive supportive care such as rest, fluids and fever control, to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.

## COVID-19 Prevention

**Q: Is there a vaccine?**

A: Currently, there is no vaccine available.

**Q: How can I best protect myself?**

A: Practice the following:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- If you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Standard household cleansers and wipes are effective in cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- It's currently flu and respiratory disease season and health authorities around the world recommend getting vaccinated, taking everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs, and taking flu antivirals if prescribed.

**Q: Should I wear a face mask? Will that help protect me?**

A: If you are sick: You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room. Learn what to do if you are sick.

If you are not sick: You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.