

# Awareness of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

## Background

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. COVID-19 originated in China in late 2019, then quickly spread across the globe, and the World Health Organization (WHO) designated COVID-19 a global pandemic in March 2020. How long the pandemic will continue depends on many things, including researchers' work to learn more about this novel (new) virus, the search for a treatment and vaccine, and all our individual efforts to take precautions to slow the spread. The latest situation summary updates are available on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) [coronavirus webpage](#).

## Signs and Symptoms

- 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, and may include: 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. For the latest information about symptoms, see the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- Emergency warning signs to seek immediate care include persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, difficulty breathing, bluish lips/face, and inability to wake or stay awake.
- Only designated laboratory tests can diagnose the virus.

## Know How it Spreads

- COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet).
- Respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks can land in the mouths or noses of people nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- It may be possible to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes, although this

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

- Some people who are not showing symptoms (asymptomatic) may be able to spread the virus.

## People Who are at Higher Risk

According to the CDC, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at [higher risk for severe illness](#) or complications from COVID-19. This includes:

- People 65 years and older and those who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, such as: chronic lung disease; asthma; serious heart conditions; severe obesity; diabetes; chronic kidney disease; liver disease and those who are immunocompromised.

## How to Protect Yourself & Others

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Everyone can take part in slowing the spread of COVID-19 by taking precautionary steps.

### COVID-19 Precautions

- ✓ Avoid close contact. Maintain good [physical distance](#) (about 6 feet) between yourself and others.
- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a [cloth face cover](#) when around others. Continue to keep appropriate physical distancing—the face cover is not a substitute for staying 6 feet apart.
- ✓ [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. When soap/water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol.
- ✓ Cover coughs and sneezes. Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can and immediately clean your hands with soap/water or hand sanitizer.
- ✓ [Routinely clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, printers, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- ✓ Clean with [disinfectants listed by the EPA](#) for use against SARS-CoV-2—the virus that causes COVID-19.

## What to Do If You Are Sick

- If you have a fever, cough or other [symptoms](#), you may have COVID-19. Most people have mild illness and are able to recover at home. If you think you may have been exposed or ill, contact your healthcare provider.
- Do NOT come to work if you are sick or have been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19. Contact your supervisor and inform them of your status.
- If you have an emergency warning sign (including trouble breathing), get immediate medical attention.
- Keep track of symptoms, such as when they began, severity, medications used, and when they subside.
- If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and want to get tested, call your healthcare provider first. You may also contact one of the state-provided testing programs. See the [CDPH COVID-19 website](#) to find out more about testing in your area.
- Self-isolate. Stay home except to get medical care. Separate yourself from others at home, including pets.
- Avoid sharing personal items and practice the above precautions for protecting yourself & others.
- Follow CDC (or your doctor's) recommendations for [when to discontinue home isolation](#). In general, persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:
  - ✓ At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, and
  - ✓ At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and
  - ✓ Other symptoms have improved.

*This note is based on information from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#).*

*For more information about public health guidance in your area, use [this map](#) to find your location and [local public health department COVID-19 resources](#).*