

COVID-19 Disease Fact Sheet



What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

What is the name of the virus causing the outbreak of coronavirus disease?

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, shortened to SARS-CoV-2.

How does COVID-19 spread?

- Person-to-person spread
 - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- Spread from contact with infected 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. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

How easily does the virus spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community “community spread” in some affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

Can someone spread the virus without being sick?

People are thought to be most contagious when they are the most symptomatic (the sickest). Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms.

Is there any cost to the patient for testing?

If testing is done at the NJ Department of Health laboratories through the proper channels with proper approvals, there is no charge to the patient for the test itself.

What are common symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- Fever
- cough
- Shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How is COVID-19 treated?

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Should I be concerned about pets or other animals and COVID-19?

To date, CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19.

What about animals or animal products imported from China?

CDC does not have any evidence to suggest that animals or animal products imported from China pose a risk for spreading.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe

What to do if you are sick with COVID-19 disease?

- Stay home except to get medical care
- Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home
- Call ahead before visiting your doctor
- Wear a facemask when you are around other people and before you enter a healthcare provider's office
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue
- Avoid sharing personal household items such as drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables
- Monitor your symptoms and seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening
- If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19

How to prepare and take action for COVID-19 at work place?

To help prevent workplace exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, employers are encouraged to do the following:

- Actively encourage sick employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness to stay home
- Separate sick employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms upon arrival to work or become sick during the day from other employees and send them home immediately
- Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees
- Perform routine environmental cleaning
- Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps
 - Check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices
 - Advise employees to check themselves for symptoms of respiratory illness
 - Employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor
- **Additional Measures:**
 - Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor
 - If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employer should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

What if I recently traveled to an area affected by COVID-19?

If you have traveled to a country that has a Level 3 Travel Health Notice (widespread, ongoing transmission) including China, Iran, Italy and South Korea, you will be asked to stay home for a period of 14 days from the time you left that country.

Take these steps to monitor your health and practice social distancing:

1. Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever. Also, watch for cough or trouble breathing.
2. Stay home and avoid contact with others. Do not go to work or school for this 14-day period. Discuss your work situation with your employer before returning to work.
3. Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares during the time you are practicing social distancing.
4. Avoid crowded places (such as shopping centers and movie theaters) and limit your activities in public.
5. Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters).

What if I recently traveled to an area affected by COVID-19 and got sick?

If you get sick with fever (100.4°F/38°C or higher), cough, or have trouble breathing:

- Seek medical care. Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room.
- Tell your doctor about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.

If you need to seek medical care for other reasons, such as dialysis, call ahead to your doctor and tell them about your recent travel to an area with widespread or ongoing community spread of COVID-19.

The NJDOH Novel Coronavirus Call Center is open and is taking calls from the general public only. It is open 24/7 and can accommodate callers in multiple languages. They can be reached at 1-800-222-1222 or 1-800962-1253 if in NJ but using a non-NJ cell phone. This call center is not for clinicians and they should call their local health department for guidance.