Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) FACT SHEET

What is novel coronavirus?

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people and can spread from person to person.

Why is the disease causing the outbreak now being called coronavirus disease 2019, COVID-19?

On February 11, 2020 the World Health Organization announced an official name for the disease that is causing the current outbreak of coronavirus disease, first identified in Wuhan China. The new name of this disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as "2019 novel coronavirus" or "2019-nCoV."

How does COVID-19 spread?

The exact way the virus is spread is not fully known. With similar coronaviruses (MERS and SARS) person-to-person spread is thought to have happened mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other viruses that cause respiratory illness spread. There also may be some spread when a person touches a surface or object that has virus on it and then touches his or her own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. Spread of SARS and MERS between people has generally occurred between close contacts. There is much more to learn about COVID-19 and investigations are ongoing.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly 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 can I help protect myself?

This virus is not spreading in the United States right now, but the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

TIPS:

Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) advises that people follow these tips to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses:

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should:

- 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.

What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should get medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

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 this virus.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.