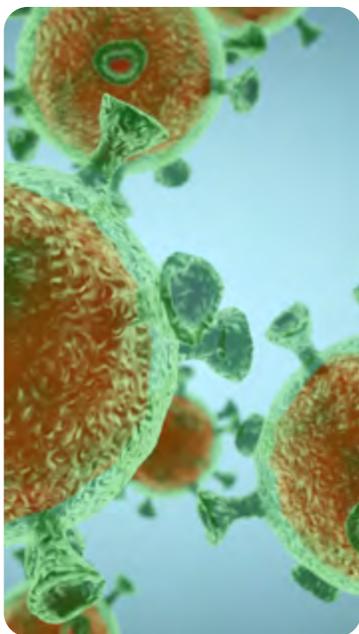


## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Coronavirus Disease 2019, or more simply COVID-19, is a disease that affects the respiratory system—the part of our body that lets us breathe.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include a fever, coughing, and problems breathing. Tens of thousands of people have gotten sick from COVID-19. Some people have died from it.



When someone with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes, they send out respiratory droplets that have the virus.

This guide has information about this disease and its symptoms. It also explains ways to prepare for, and protect yourself from, COVID-19. This guide also has facts to help you make sense of all the recent news about COVID-19.

### What is COVID-19?

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While COVID-19 is a new disease, it is part of a family of viruses called coronaviruses.

The first identified case of COVID-19 was in China in 2019. This virus has now spread to many countries around the world.

### How does COVID-19 spread?

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The most common way this virus spreads is from person to person. This is much like what happens with the flu. **When someone with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes, they send out respiratory droplets that have the virus.**

**Here are examples of how it can spread:**

- If you are in close contact (within 6 feet) of this person, you can catch the virus **by breathing in their respiratory droplets.**
- You can get the virus from **shaking hands with someone who has it** and then touching your own face, nose or mouth.
- You can also get the virus from **drinking from the same cup, or eating from the same plate,** as someone who has COVID-19.



## How do I know if someone has COVID-19?

- **That is not always possible.** While many people with COVID-19 feel sick and have symptoms, that is not always the case. Sometimes people do not know they have the virus.
- It can take as little as 2 days or as long as 2 weeks from the time someone is exposed to this virus before they feel sick. **They can spread the disease even when they feel well and have no symptoms.**

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

COVID-19 affects the respiratory system. **Symptoms can be mild, like those of the common cold. Or symptoms can be more severe like shortness of breath and other breathing problems.** Sometimes people die from COVID-19.

Beyond these symptoms, people with this virus can also have complications. Those can include pneumonia (an infection of the lungs) or too little oxygen getting to the lungs. Sometimes these symptoms and complications lead to death. That is most likely when people are older or also have other medical problems.

As of now, there is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. There is also no cure for it yet. Scientists are working hard on that.

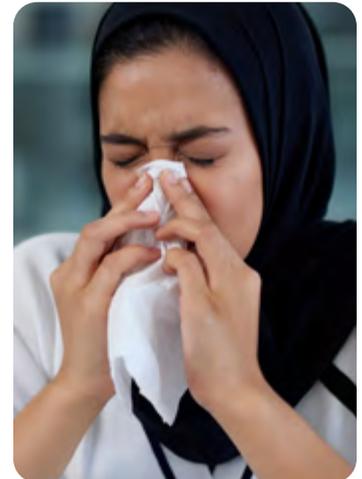
The good news is that there is supportive care — treatments to help control or relieve a person's symptoms while their immune system works to kill the virus.

**Here are some ways to treat COVID-19 symptoms and complications:**

**If you have mild symptoms** (like that of the common cold), it is best to stay home from school, work, and away from others. Keep doing this until you feel better.

**If you have more severe symptoms** (such as breathing problems), you might need to be in the hospital. Treatments can include oxygen, IV (intravenous) fluids, and special medicines.

**If you have very severe symptoms**, you may need to be in the hospital's ICU (intensive care unit). Patients this sick might need to be on a breathing machine (ventilator) that helps them breathe.



## How can I protect myself and others from getting COVID-19?

There is a saying, “**Keep calm and carry on.**” This is good to think about in regard to COVID-19. **There are some common-sense ways you can help protect yourself, your family, and the community from getting COVID-19:**



### 1. Wash your hands

This is one of the most important things you can do to prevent getting COVID-19 or other viral disease. You might be thinking that you already know how to wash your hands. But really, there is more to it. Here is how to properly wash your hands:

- Wet your hands with water and then lather them with soap. Make sure to wash between your fingers, under the nails, and on the back of your hands.
- Keep washing your hands for 20 seconds. That might be longer than you are used to doing. You might sing the “Happy Birthday” song 2 times. Or have young kids sing “Twinkle, Twinkle” 3 times. It takes about 20 seconds to sing either of these songs.
- After you finish washing your hands, rinse them with clean running water.
- Dry your hands with a clean towel or let them air dry.

**It is best to wash your hands with soap and water.** But if you are not near a sink then you can use a hand sanitizer. Read the label to make sure the sanitizer is at least 60% alcohol. Rub the sanitizer on your palms, fingers, and back of your hands until they are dry. Like with hand washing, do this for about 20 seconds.



## 2. Keep Your Distance

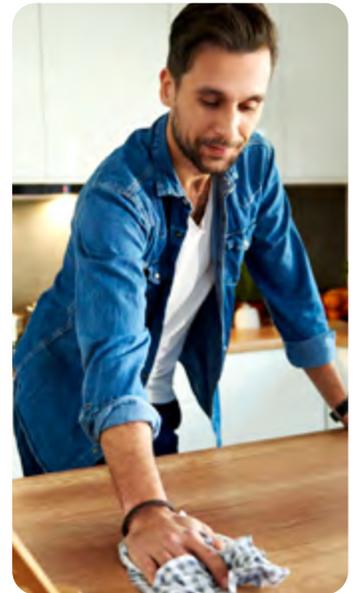
Stay at least 6 feet away from anyone who is coughing or sneezing. Do not shake hands, hug, or kiss someone who has symptoms.

Try not to travel to places where many people are sick with COVID-19. If you live in, or need to visit, one of these places then keep your distance from those who are sick or have symptoms.

## 3. Clean items that are used by many people

Items to clean include:

- Doorknobs
- Counter Tops
- Telephones
- Bedside Tables
- Cell phones
- Bathroom Surfaces
- TV Controls
- Computers



**Check each item's cleaning directions.** For many items you can use regular household cleaning spray, wipes, or alcohol to clean and disinfect.

## Other ways to protect yourself and others

- Try not to put your fingers in, or near, your eyes, nose, and mouth. The reason for this is that germs from your hands can enter the body when you touch your face.
- When you cough or sneeze, do so into your elbow and not your hands. When you sneeze or cough into your hands, you spread germs onto everything you touch.
- It is fine to sneeze into a tissue so long as you throw that dirty tissue into a closed bin, right away.
- Stay home when you are sick. This includes not going to school, work, or crowded public places like a store or the movies. I know some people will not get paid if they miss work. But staying home when sick is an important way to get healthy and keep others safe.
- If you have any symptoms, or even think you might be getting sick, do not visit people who have health problems. This includes not going to see them at a nursing home or in the hospital.

## Should I wear a face mask?

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**For most people, the answer is no.** While you might see many people wearing masks, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, a well-respected group of public health experts) do not recommend this as a way to prevent COVID-19 in healthy people. The reason is simple. **Most masks are so loose that they do not protect people from breathing in the virus.**

**But some people should wear a mask. Here is more to know:**

- **You should wear a face mask if you have COVID-19.** The mask helps keep you from spreading this virus to others who are nearby, such as family and close friends.
- You should wear a mask **if you work in health care or are caring for someone who is sick**, either at home or in a health care facility.
- **If you do need to wear a mask, it is best to use a N95 respirator.** This should be fitted and snug on your face. Respirators on these masks, when fitted properly, filter out at least 95% of very small particles. This helps protect you from breathing in viruses and bacteria (germs).

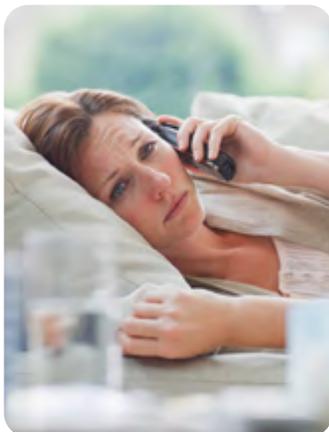


## How can I prepare for an outbreak of COVID-19 near me?

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**Here are common-sense ways to prepare for an outbreak of this disease in your community:**

- Have enough food for you and your family to eat for a few weeks.
- Keep at least a 30-day supply of all your medications.
- Stock plenty of important household items like cleaning wipes and laundry detergent.
- If you have babies or very young children, make sure to have enough diapers and food they can eat.
- If you have school-aged children, make plans about what to do if their classes are canceled.
- If you are caring for parents or other older adults, figure out who will care for them if you cannot.
- Talk with your doctor if you have young children or are caring for older adults or someone with a serious illness. Your doctor might recommend that you get a bacterial pneumonia vaccination.



## What if someone I know is, or may be, sick with COVID-19?

**Call your health care provider right away if you think you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 and now have a fever, cough, or trouble breathing.** It is important to talk with the health care provider before going to the clinic, urgent care clinic, emergency room, or hospital. This is because staff needs to prepare before you arrive. They might tell you to wear a mask or go to a part of their facility apart from other patients.

### Here is what to do if someone in your home has COVID-19:

- **The person who is sick should not be near others.** If possible, the person who is sick should stay in another room and use a different bathroom.
- **The person who is sick should wear a face mask when in the same room as others.** But this might not be possible if they have trouble breathing.
- If you are caring for someone who is sick, you should **wear a face mask when in their room.**
- **Be careful with body fluids from the sick person.** This includes their blood, mucus, and urine. Wear a face mask, gown, and gloves if you need to touch any of these fluids. Should any of their fluids touch your skin, scrub with soap and water right away.

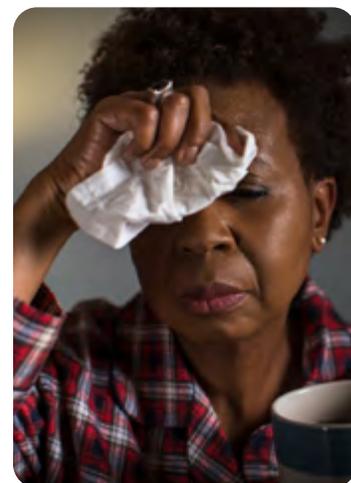
There are many myths, scares, and lies being spread about COVID-19. It is important to stay calm. **Here are some facts:**

### **FACT:**

COVID-19 can make anyone sick. It does not just affect people from a certain race or ethnicity.

While this disease did start in China, **people from any race or ethnicity can get it.** This virus does not target just certain people. **Those of Asian descent are not more likely to get or spread this virus** unless they have traveled to China in the last few weeks or been in contact with someone who has a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19.

**Please do not treat someone differently just because they are of Asian descent.** That includes those who are Chinese-American. We are all in this together.



**FACT:**

Someone who has finished quarantine or been released from isolation is not at risk of spreading this infection to others.

Quarantine (sometimes called “isolation”) is when someone with COVID-19 must stay away from others for as long as they are contagious and could spread this virus. It is safe to again have contact after doctors say that this person is no longer contagious.

## Putting It All Together

**Hopefully this guide helped explain more about COVID-19 and ways to prepare and protect yourself, your family, and community.**

Scientists are learning more and more about this new virus. There may be changes about what to expect, but please do not believe everything you read online or see on TV. Some of that may not be true.

To get the most accurate and up-to-date information, we recommend you go to trusted sources like your doctor or public health official. **Here are two other excellent sources of information:**

**United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

**World Health Organization (WHO)**

[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

**Stay calm and carry on.** By being informed, and with support from family, friends and community, we can prepare and protect ourselves from COVID-19.