

Selective Information on Coronavirus COVID 19

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1. What are the symptoms of coronavirus?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, fatigue and dry cough. These symptoms are usually mild and develop gradually. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the disease is mild in more than 80 percent of cases.

Some 14 percent develop severe disease, including pneumonia and difficulty breathing, while about 5 percent have critical disease, including respiratory failure, septic shock and multiple organ failure.

2. How does COVID-19 spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from a person who is sick.

3. Can the virus that causes COVID-19 be transmitted through the air?

Studies to date suggest that the virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through contact with respiratory droplets rather than through the air. See previous answer on "How does COVID-19 spread?"

4. Can COVID-19 be caught from a person who has no symptoms?

The main way the disease spreads is through respiratory droplets expelled by someone who is coughing. The risk of catching COVID-19 from someone with no symptoms at all is very low. However, many people with COVID-19 experience only mild symptoms. This is particularly true at the early stages of the disease. It is therefore possible to catch COVID-19 from someone who has, for example, just a mild cough and does not feel ill. WHO is assessing ongoing research on the period of transmission of COVID-19 and will continue to share updated findings.

5. Can I catch COVID-19 from the faeces of someone with the disease?

The risk of catching COVID-19 from the faeces of an infected person appears to be low. While initial investigations suggest the virus may be present in faeces in some cases, spread through this route is not a main feature of the outbreak. WHO is assessing ongoing research on the ways COVID-19 is spread and will continue to share new findings. Because this is a risk, however, it is another reason to clean hands regularly, after using the bathroom and before eating.

What can I do to protect myself and prevent the spread of disease?

6. Protection measures for everyone

Stay aware of the latest information on the COVID-19 outbreak, available on the WHO website and through your national and local public health authority. Many countries around the world have seen cases of COVID-19 and several have seen outbreaks. Authorities in China and some other countries have succeeded in slowing or stopping their outbreaks. However, the situation is unpredictable so check regularly for the latest news.

You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially when you:
 - get home or into work
 - blow your nose, sneeze or cough
 - eat or handle food

Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.

- **Is hand sanitiser more effective than soap and water?**

The best way to protect yourself from infections like coronavirus is to regularly wash your hands with soap and water. If soap or water aren't available and your hands are visibly clean, then sanitiser gel can be used. But proper hand washing is the most effective method and this should be your first choice.

- Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

Why? When someone coughs or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease.

- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.

Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.

- Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

- Stay home if you feel unwell or if any member of your household feels unwell with the following symptoms. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.

- Keep up to date on the latest COVID-19 hotspots (cities or local areas where COVID-19 is spreading widely). If possible, avoid any unnecessary traveling to these places – especially if you are an older person, are pregnant or have diabetes, heart or lung disease.

Why? You have a higher chance of catching COVID-19 in one of these areas.

7. What is the incubation period for the coronavirus?

It takes five days on average to start showing the symptoms, scientists have said, but some people will get symptoms much later than this.

The incubation period lasts up to 14 days, the World Health Organization (WHO) says. But some researchers say it may be up to 24 days. The recommendation from the government currently is 14 days.

Knowing and understanding the incubation period is very important. It allows doctors and health authorities to introduce more effective ways to control the spread of the virus.

8. How do you treat the new coronavirus?

There is no vaccine and no specific antiviral medicine to prevent or treat COVID-19. Those affected should receive care to relieve symptoms and the WHO says most patients recover due to supportive care.

9. If you recover from coronavirus are you immune?

Well, it is too soon to tell. This virus has only been around since the end of December, but from experience with other viruses and coronaviruses you should have antibodies to the virus which will protect you.

With Sars and other coronaviruses we tended not to see reinfection. Now there are some reports from China of people who are released from hospital subsequently testing positive but we're not sure about those tests.

However, the key thing was those people were no longer infectious.

10. What are the differences between coronavirus and flu? -

Coronavirus and flu share many similar symptoms, making it difficult to diagnose without a test.

The main coronavirus symptoms to look out for are fever and a cough. Flu often has other symptoms too, such as a sore throat, while people with coronavirus may feel short of breath.

People who think they may be affected by coronavirus need to call the NHS 111 phone service for further advice. They should not go to their GP, or A&E.

In Scotland, check NHS inform, then ring your GP in office hours, or 111 out-of-hours. In Wales call NHS 111, and in Northern Ireland, call your GP.

11. What does self-isolation involve?

Self-isolation means staying at home for 14 days, not going to work, school or other public places, and avoiding public transport or taxis. You should also stay separate from other people in your home.

Ask for help if you need groceries, other shopping or medication dropped off - you can have doorstep deliveries, but you shouldn't have any visitors.

You should even try to stay away from your pets - if that isn't possible, wash your hands before and after touching them.

12. How dangerous is coronavirus for people with asthma?

Respiratory infections, such as coronavirus, can trigger the symptoms of asthma.

Asthma UK advises those who are concerned about the virus to follow a series of steps to manage their asthma.

These include taking a preventer inhaler daily as prescribed. This helps cut the risk of an asthma attack being triggered by any respiratory virus, including coronavirus.

13. If your children's schools are closed will there be financial help available for parents/carers?

Employers have to give you time off to deal with a domestic emergency, but they don't have to pay you.

The time you take has to be a reasonable amount. You can apply for some unpaid leave as well.

And the government has relaxed the rules for applying for benefits if you have coronavirus.

Indigo will act as sponsor for relevant families who may be eligible to apply for some support through the following grant:

<https://www.aberlour.org.uk/urgentassistancefund/>

14. Can coronavirus be transmitted by door handles and how long does it survive?

If someone infected with the virus coughs on to their hand and then touches something, that surface may become contaminated.

Door handles are a good example of a surface that might pose a risk.

Experts think that coronavirus can survive on surfaces, possibly for days. So it is best to wash your hands regularly to help reduce the risk of infection and spread of the virus.

15. Is it safe to swim in a public pool?

The water in most swimming pools contains chlorine, a chemical which can kill viruses. So it should be safe to use a swimming pool as long as it is properly chlorinated.

However, you could still catch the virus from an infected person in a changing-room or building if they contaminate surfaces, such as door handles.

And someone with the virus could also spread it to others through coughs and sneezes if they come into close contact.

16. Should I start wearing a mask to limit my chance of spreading or contracting the virus?

Although doctors and surgeons often wear face masks, there is little evidence that wearing face masks by the public makes a difference.

Public Health England has said it does not "recommend the use of face masks as a means of protection from coronavirus". It says there is very little evidence of widespread benefit from their use outside of clinical settings,

Experts say good hygiene - such as regularly washing your hands and certainly before touching your face - is vastly more effective.

17. What is the risk to children?

In general, children appear to be relatively unaffected by coronavirus, according to data from China.

This may be because they are able to shake off the infection or have either no symptoms, or only very mild ones similar to a cold.

However, children with underlying lung problems, such as asthma, may have to be more careful, as the virus could trigger an attack.

For most children, though, it will be a respiratory infection like any other and no cause for alarm.

The UK government would have the power to close schools to prevent the spread of the virus, if it wanted. Schools in 14 countries have already been shut, while another 13 have closed some schools.

18. Can you catch the virus from food prepared by an infected individual?

Someone infected with coronavirus could potentially pass it on to someone else if the food they prepare has not been handled hygienically.

Coronavirus can be spread by cough droplets on hands.

Washing your hands before touching and eating food is good advice for anyone, to stop the spread of germs.

19. Can I catch COVID-19 from my pet?

While there has been one instance of a dog being infected in Hong Kong, to date, there is no evidence that a dog, cat or any pet can transmit COVID-19. COVID-19 is mainly spread through droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks. To protect yourself, clean your hands frequently and thoroughly.

20. Is it safe to receive a package from any area where COVID-19 has been reported?

Yes. The likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, travelled, and exposed to different conditions and temperature is also low. However in an area where there is an outbreak it is possible that the package handler may be infected and could transmit the virus on the package.

21. Should people avoid shaking hands?

We may get to a point where if we see more widespread infection we ask people to limit the social contact they have with each other.

This could include limiting everyday interaction, although we're not there yet. What's most important at the moment is that people practice good hand and respiratory hygiene and wash their hands frequently and thoroughly.

22. Should people wear face masks to protect themselves from infection?

Face masks play a very important role in clinical settings, such as hospitals but there's very little evidence of widespread benefit from their use outside of these clinical settings. Facemasks must be worn correctly, changed frequently, removed properly and disposed of safely in order to be effective.