

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). COVID-19 is the most recently discovered coronavirus disease.

What are the symptoms?

The most common symptoms are fever, fatigue, and cough. Other symptoms include aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. Most symptoms are mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but do not develop symptoms (known as asymptomatic). People of any age with the following conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19:

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
- Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes

How does the illness spread?

COVID-19 is spread from person to person. When a person with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes, small droplets from the nose and mouth can land on objects or surfaces around the person, or people around them. People can catch COVID-19 by touching these droplets and then their own eyes, nose or mouth. Studies to date show that the virus is mainly transmitted through contact with respiratory droplets, although scientists are looking into the possibility of the virus being airborne.

How can I protect myself and prevent the spread?

- Regularly [wash your hands](#) with soap and water; use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when a hand-washing station is unavailable.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from anyone who isn't part of your immediate household.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Follow good respiratory hygiene – cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze. [Wear a face covering.](#)
- Stay home if you feel sick. Unless you have life-threatening symptoms such as difficulty breathing, take advantage of your telemedicine provider rather than going to the ER or urgent care center.

How long does the virus last on surfaces?

We don't know for certain, but COVID-19 behaves like other coronaviruses, which can persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days, depending on the type of surface. If you think a surface is infected, [clean](#) it with a household cleaner or EPA-registered disinfectant that is appropriate for the surface, following label instructions. Then, wash your hands with soap and water.

Are Tamiflu or other anti-viral medications an effective defense against COVID-19?

No. Currently there is no specific drug nor vaccine for COVID-19.

What should I NOT do?

Smoking, taking antibiotics, or wearing multiple masks are all not effective against COVID-19 and can be harmful.

Most importantly, be cautious. Wash your hands often with soap and water, avoid touching your face, keep your distance from those who are sick, and stay home if you're not feeling well. Practice [social distancing](#) even if you aren't sick. Cases have shown that persons can be contagious even if they aren't exhibiting symptoms of the disease. We're all in this together – stay safe!