

# CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): PREPARE AND RESPOND WITHOUT PANIC

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First known as the novel coronavirus, the virus now referred to as COVID-19 has been declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) and has reached the U.S. and Canada. With the situation changing daily, it's critical that we make informed decisions based on facts, not fear of the unknown. Choose information from reputable sources over rumors and speculation.

## Risk in the U.S. and Canada

- ▶ Current risk of contracting COVID-19 in the U.S. and Canada remains low. People with flu-like symptoms are far more likely to have the common cold or flu than COVID-19.
- ▶ About half the people diagnosed with COVID-19 around the world have already recovered. It's estimated that over 80 percent of those infected will experience only mild symptoms.
- ▶ Risk for more serious health effects is highest among:
  - Older adults (age 60 and up)
  - People with underlying health conditions (e.g., heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, cancer)
  - People with weakened immune systems
- ▶ The majority of deaths caused by COVID-19 have occurred among people meeting at least one of these conditions.

## Transmission & Diagnosis

- ▶ **Transmission:** spread primarily through respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing. Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands, or touching an object with the virus on it, followed by touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands can spread the virus.
- ▶ Preliminary studies indicate coronaviruses can survive on surfaces for a few hours to a few days depending on environmental conditions.
- ▶ **Diagnosis:** If you suspect you have COVID-19, go to your health care provider. A lab test will be performed and sent to the CDC.

## Signs, Symptoms & Treatment

- ▶ **Incubation:** It takes between 2-14 days for symptoms to appear after exposure. During this time period, people may be contagious and able to pass on the virus. The average onset of symptoms is around 5 days.
- ▶ **Symptoms:** Mild to moderate respiratory illness similar to the common cold. Symptoms may include fever, cough and shortness of breath. In serious cases, these symptoms can progress to pneumonia and other life-threatening respiratory conditions.
- ▶ **Treatment:** There is currently no vaccine for COVID-19 and no specific treatment beyond those typically prescribed for the common cold and seasonal flu. If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected, focus on supportive care to relieve symptoms. Do the following to help prevent the disease from spreading:
  - Stay home except to get medical care. Don't go to work, school or public areas and avoid public transportation.
  - Wear a surgical mask when around other people or when visiting a health care provider.
  - Call ahead before visiting your doctor so the office can take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
  - Clean all "high-touch" surfaces everyday with a household cleaning spray or wipe.
  - Avoid sharing personal household items like drinking glasses, utensils or bedding. Wash these items thoroughly with soap and water after use.
  - Seek medical attention if your conditions worsen (e.g., difficulty breathing).

- ▶ Employers should encourage sick workers to stay home or make use of available telework options. Employers should consider the feasibility of allowing workers who are sick or suspected of being sick to stay home without the loss of pay should vacation or sick time be unavailable.

## Preventing & Limiting the Spread of the Virus: General Guidelines

The following standard precautions are effective at limiting the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses. These steps can be implemented now out of caution and may become more necessary if the virus is not contained.

- ▶ Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. **It sounds simple, but this is the most effective way to limit the spread of infectious disease.**
- ▶ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- ▶ Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- ▶ Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, stay home. If you must go out in public, do your best to avoid close contact with other people.
- ▶ Thoroughly clean and disinfect objects and surfaces you come in contact with



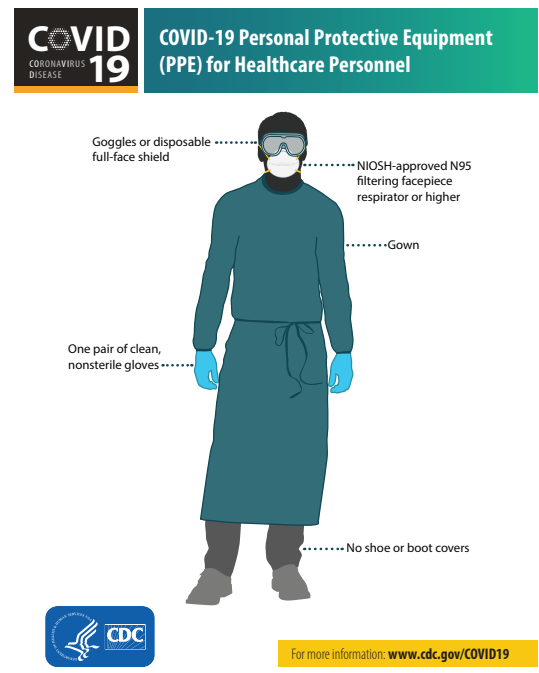
## Preventing & Limiting the Spread of the Virus: Frontline Workers

Workers who may come in contact with infected persons, such as healthcare workers, should take additional precautions. In addition to the steps above, these workers should:

- ▶ Wear personal protective equipment (PPE). This includes N95 respirators, gloves, gowns and eye protection.
- ▶ Be trained on safe donning, doffing and disposal of PPE to avoid infectious disease transmission.
- ▶ Be medically able to wear the type of respirator needed and fit-tested to wear it. A respirator can't protect you if it doesn't fit your face.
- ▶ Be aware of the differences between surgical masks and N95s. Surgical masks do not protect the wearer from airborne respiratory droplets. **Remember: surgical masks protect others from exposure to you; N95s protect you from exposure to others.**

## Travel & Potentially Exposed Persons

- ▶ The U.S. government is advising against traveling to specific parts of Italy and South Korea. Travel from Iran is banned.
- ▶ CDC staff are screening passengers at airports returning from affected countries and people with unexplained respiratory symptoms. Travelers fill out a questionnaire and CDC staff take travelers' temperature using a handheld thermometer and watch for coughing or signs of difficulty breathing.
- ▶ Passengers suspected of having COVID-19 may be housed and monitored at CDC quarantine stations.



## Stopping Stigma

Stigma and discrimination may occur when a certain group becomes associated with a disease. Help fight stigma and discrimination by learning the facts, educating others and offering social support. Viruses do not target specific racial or ethnic groups. Being Chinese or Asian American does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.

## Additional Resources

CDC: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html)

WHO: [www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)

OSHA: [www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/index.html)

For more on infection control measures and how employers can respond:

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/infection-control.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/infection-control.html)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/guidance-business-response.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/guidance-business-response.html)