

How COVID-19 Spreads

What is a coronavirus?

A coronavirus is a virus that can cause respiratory illness. Some coronaviruses can cause the common cold. Recent notable coronavirus infections include:

- Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)
- Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)
- Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which causes the disease known as COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a coronavirus. This is a new disease. Anyone can get COVID-19.

How does COVID-19 spread?

- Person to person through respiratory droplets or aerosols (what you breathe out). These particles can be made by someone who has COVID-19 in normal activities such as:
 - Breathing
 - Talking
 - Coughing, sneezing
 - Singing

The particles can spread to another person when they are near someone with COVID-19. They can also spread by touching surfaces that have the virus on them and then touching one's nose, mouth, or eyes. In either situation, droplets can land in the nose, mouth, or lungs, causing an infection. Spreading COVID-19 is more likely when people are in close contact with one another and not wearing masks.

How can I avoid getting COVID-19 and giving it to others?

- Wear a mask in public spaces.
- Keep at least 6 feet away from others when possible and avoid gatherings.
- Wash, lather, and scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds, rinse, and dry.
 - Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Disinfect surfaces that are touched often.
- Check yourself for symptoms - shortness of breath or hard time breathing, fever, or cough
- Stay home if you have COVID-19 symptoms. Wear a mask to protect others in the home.
- Be sure to get the vaccine when it is available in your area. The vaccine is safe and effective and gives most people protection against COVID-19.

Doctors and scientists are learning new things about the virus all the time, and facts can change quickly. Please see the COVID-19 Symptoms and Testing module for more information.

Have questions? Ask your doctor or health provider at your next appointment.

Anderson, K., & Stewart, T. (2020). COVID-19. [PowerPoint slides].

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (July 31, 2020). How to protect yourself & others.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (May 13, 2020). Symptoms. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (April 28, 2020). Testing.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/index.html>

World Health Organization. (n.d.) Coronavirus. https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1