

# TOPIC 14: asymptomatic spread of COVID-19



# Agenda

- Welcome
- Review: How Do Viruses Work?
- How Can Viruses Spread From Someone Who Doesn't Feel Sick?
- Reflection

# Learning Objectives

- Explain how a person can be infected with SARS-CoV-2 and not feel sick but can **still spread the virus to others.**
- Discuss one (1) reason **why infection control recommendations** for COVID-19, such as masking for source control, **are in place in healthcare settings.**

# POLL

**Answer the question considering your experiences in your work life.  
Select all that apply:**

**I work in a facility that has treated**

- People with COVID-19 who were very sick (e.g., fever, fatigue, difficulty breathing),
- People with COVID-19 who had mild symptoms (e.g., cold symptoms), or
- People with COVID-19 who had no symptoms.

# How Do Viruses Work?

- Viruses use living things, including people, to make copies of themselves.
- When enough virus gets into a person's cells and starts making copies of itself, the immune system revs up to fight the virus.
- SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is spread by respiratory droplets that are released into the air when an infected person talks, breaths, coughs, or sings.

# INSIDE INFECTION CONTROL

## HOW CAN COVID-19 SPREAD WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL SICK?

EPISODE 24



# People who don't feel sick can spread virus

- People can be infected with a virus, and their immune system can be working – and they might not feel sick.
- Even if they don't feel sick, they can spread the virus to others.

# Definitions

## **Pre-symptomatic Infection**

When a person has been infected with a virus and hasn't started feeling sick yet but will develop symptoms.

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## **Asymptomatic Infection**

When a person is infected with a virus and will never feel any symptoms at all.



# Recognizing people who are contagious

**Can you tell who has COVID-19?**



**No**, even people who appear healthy and show no symptoms may have COVID-19 and may be able to spread the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

# Did you know?

The flu can also be spread by people who are **pre-symptomatic** or **asymptomatic**.

People with flu are most contagious 3-4 days after their illness begins.

Some otherwise healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5-7 days after becoming sick.

Some people, especially young children and people with weakened immune systems, might be able to infect others with flu viruses for an even longer time.

# Controlling the spread

People who are pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic don't have symptoms, but **they can still spread COVID-19.**

## Why It Matters

We can't tell who may be infected and able to infect others, so all our **infection control actions are still important.**

# Reflection

# WRAP-UP

- What did you learn today about asymptomatic spread?
- What is one thing you'll need to do, or continue to do, in your work to protect yourself and others from diseases that can spread when people are infected but may not look or feel sick?
- Does anyone have any



# Key Takeaways

- People can be infected with a virus and their immune system can be working – **and they might not feel sick.**
- People who may not feel sick or show symptoms can still **spread viruses.**
- That's why **infection control recommendations** for COVID-19, such as masking for source control, are in place in healthcare settings.

# Resources and Future Training sessions

Project Firstline on CDC:

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

CDC's Project Firstline on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/CDCProjectFirstline>

CDC's Project Firstline on Twitter:

[https://twitter.com/CDC\\_Firstline](https://twitter.com/CDC_Firstline)

Project Firstline *Inside Infection Control* on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvrp9iOILTQZQGtDnSDGViKDdRt>



# Feedback Form

