Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated April 17, 2020

Other Frequently Asked Questions and Answers About:

- Travel
- Pregnant Women and COVID-19
- Water Transmission
- Healthcare Professionals
- Healthcare Infection
- Laboratory Diagnostic Panels
- Laboratory Biosafety
- Personal Protective Equipment
- K-12 Schools and Child Care Program Administrators
- Community events: for administrators and individuals
- Retirement Communities and Independent Living Facilities
- Correctional and Detention Facilities
- Event Organizers & Individuals
- Cloth Face Coverings

Follow Official Sources for Accurate Information!

Help control the spread of rumors. Visit FEMA's rumor control page ⧉ .

Beware of fraud schemes related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Visit Office of Inspector General's COVID-19 fraud alert page ⧉ .

Coronavirus Disease 2019 Basics

What is a novel coronavirus?	+
Why is the disease being called coronavirus disease 2019, COVID-19?	+
Why might someone blame or avoid individuals and groups (create stigma) because of COVID-19?	+
How can people help stop stigma related to COVID-19?	+
Why do some state's COVID-19 case numbers sometimes differ from what is posted on CDC's website?	+
How do CDC's COVID-19 case numbers compare with those provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) or Johns Hopkins?	+
Why do the number of cases for previous days increase?	+

How COVID-19 Spreads

What is the source of the virus?	+
How does the virus spread?	+
Why are we seeing a rise in cases?	+
Can someone who has had COVID-19 spread the illness to others?	+
Can someone who has been quarantined for COVID-19 spread the illness to others?	+
Can the virus that causes COVID-19 be spread through food, including restaurant take out, refrigerated or frozen packaged food?	+
Can I get sick with COVID-19 if it is on food?	+
Will warm weather stop the outbreak of COVID-19?	+
What is community spread?	+
What temperature kills the virus that causes COVID-19?	+
Can mosquitoes or ticks spread the virus that causes COVID-19?	+

How to Protect Yourself

Am I at risk for COVID-19 in the United States?	+
How many cases have been reported in the United States?	+
How can I help protect myself?	+
What should I do if I have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19?	+
Does CDC recommend the use of facemask or face coverings to prevent COVID-19?	+
Am I at risk for COVID-19 from a package or products shipping from China?	+
Is it okay for me to donate blood?	+
Should contact lens wearers take special precautions to prevent COVID-19?	+
Is contact lens disinfecting solution effective against COVID-19?	+

COVID-19 and Children

What is the risk of my child becoming sick with COVID-19?	+
How can I protect my child from COVID-19 infection?	+
Are the symptoms of COVID-19 different in children than in adults?	+
Should children wear masks?	+
How do I prepare my children in case of COVID-19 outbreak in our community?	+
What steps should parents take to protect children during a community outbreak?	+

School Dismissals and Children

While school's out, can my child hang out with their friends?	+
While school's out, how can I help my child continue learning?	+
While school's out, will kids have access to meals?	+
While school's out, how can I keep my family healthy?	+
While school's out, limit time with older adults, including relatives, and people with chronic medical conditions.	+

Preparing Your Home and Family for COVID-19

How can my family and I prepare for COVID-19?	+
What steps can my family take to reduce our risk of getting COVID-19?	+
What should I do if someone in my house gets sick with COVID-19?	+
How can I prepare in case my child's school, child care facility, or university is dismissed?	+
How can I prepare for COVID-19 at work?	+
Should I use soap and water or a hand sanitizer to protect against COVID-19?	+
What cleaning products should I use to protect against COVID-19?	+
Should I make my own hand sanitizer if I can't find it in the stores?	+

In Case of an Outbreak in Your Community

What should I do if there is an outbreak in my community?	+
Will schools be dismissed if there is an outbreak in my community?	+
Should I go to work if there is an outbreak in my community?	+
Will businesses and schools close or stay closed in my community and for how long? Will there be a "stay at home" or "shelter in place" order in my community?	+
Can CDC tell me or my employer when it is safe for me to go back to work/school after recovering from or being exposed to COVID-19?	+

Symptoms & Testing

What are the symptoms and complications that COVID-19 can cause?	+
Should I be tested for COVID-19?	+
Where can I get tested for COVID-19?	+
Can a person test negative and later test positive for COVID-19?	+
What kind of test is being used to diagnose if I have COVID-19?	+
What is serology testing? And can I be tested using this method?	+
If I have recovered from COVID-19, will I be immune to it?	+

Higher Risk

Who is at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19?	+
What should people at higher risk of serious illness with COVID-19 do?	+
How were the underlying conditions for people considered higher risk of serious illness with COVID-19 selected?	+
Are there any medications I should avoid taking if I have COVID-19?	+
What about underlying medical conditions that are not included on this list?	+
What does a well-controlled health condition mean?	+
What does more severe illness mean?	+
Are people with disabilities at higher risk?	+

Healthcare Professionals and Health Departments

What should healthcare professionals and health departments do?	+

See also: FAQs for Healthcare Professionals

COVID-19 and Funerals

Am I at risk if I go to a funeral or visitation service for someone who died of COVID-19?	+
Am I at risk if I touch someone who died of COVID-19 after they have passed away?	+
What do funeral home workers need to know about handling decedents who had COVID-19?	+
What should I do if my family member died from COVID-19 while overseas?	+
My family member died from COVID-19 while overseas. What are the requirements for returning the body to the United States?	+

What CDC is Doing

What is CDC doing about COVID-19? +

COVID-19 and Animals

Can I get COVID-19 from my pets or other animals? +

Do I need to get my pet tested for COVID-19? +

Can animals carry the virus that causes COVID-19 on their skin or fur? +

Should I avoid contact with pets or other animals if I am sick with COVID-19? +

What animals can get COVID-19? +

Since tigers can get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, should I worry about my pet cat? +

Can I walk my dog? +

What should I do if my pet gets sick and I think it's COVID-19? +

Why are animals being tested when many people can't get tested? +

Are pets from a shelter safe to adopt? +

What about imported animals or animal products? +

Can I travel to the United States with dogs or import dogs into the United States during the COVID-19 outbreak? +

What precautions should be taken for animals that have recently been imported from outside the United States (for example, by shelters, rescues, or as personal pets)? +

See also: Animals and COVID-19

Footnotes

[1]Fever may be subjective or confirmed

[2]Close contact is defined as—

a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case

– or –

b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

If such contact occurs while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment or PPE (e.g., gowns, gloves, NIOSH-certified disposable N95 respirator, eye protection), criteria for PUI consideration are met"

See CDC's updated Interim Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Persons Under Investigation for 2019 Novel Coronavirus.

Data to inform the definition of close contact are limited. Considerations when assessing close contact include the duration of exposure (e.g., longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk) and the clinical symptoms of the person with COVID-19 (e.g., coughing likely increases exposure risk as does exposure to a severely ill patient). Special consideration should be given to those exposed in health care settings.