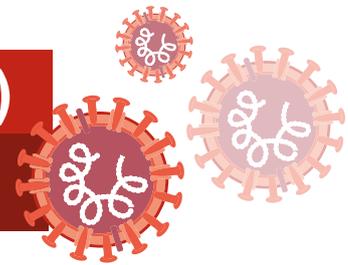
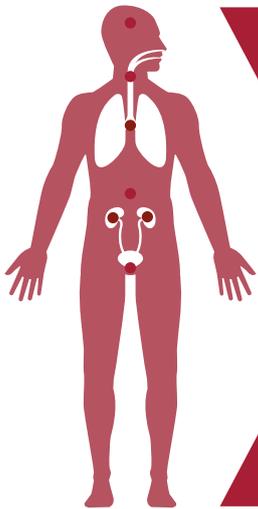


Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Information and guidance from THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION
[Updates on Website](#)



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?



IN THE MOST COMMON CASES



FEVER



COUGH



DIFFICULTY BREATHING

IN THE MOST SEVERE CASES



PNEUMONIA



KIDNEY FAILURE

In case of flu symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing)

- **Seek medical advice promptly** - call in advance to allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility.
- **Maintain a distance of at least 1 metre** (3 feet) when coughing or sneezing.
- **Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow** or tissue when you cough or sneeze, then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

THE BASIC RULES TO FOLLOW



VISIT MEDICAL FACILITIES ONLY IF STRICTLY NECESSARY TO ALLOW THESE FACILITIES TO OPERATE MORE EFFECTIVELY



AVOID CLOSE CONTACT WITH THOSE SUFFERING FROM ACUTE RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS



USE A MASK ONLY IF YOU ARE COUGHING AND SNEEZING OR ARE CARING FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION.



WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN WITH SOAP AND WATER.



DO NOT TOUCH YOUR NOSE, MOUTH AND EYES WITH YOUR HANDS



COVER YOUR MOUTH AND NOSE WHEN YOU COUGH OR SNEEZE



WIPE SURFACES WITH CHLORINE OR ALCOHOL-BASED DISINFECTANTS



DO NOT TAKE ANTIVIRAL MEDICATIONS OR ANTIBIOTICS UNLESS PRESCRIBED BY A PHYSICIAN

Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

The following information can be found on the website of the [World Health Organisation](#)



1 What it is

What is a Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases, such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

What is the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

It is a new strain of virus previously unidentified in humans. COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered Coronavirus. This new virus and illness were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China in December 2019.

Is the COVID-19 the same as SARS?

No. The virus that causes COVID-19 and the one that causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) are genetically related to one another, but are different.

How dangerous is COVID-19?

As is typically the case with respiratory diseases, for most people COVID-19 manifests only in mild symptoms such as the common cold, sore throat and fever. In more severe cases, the illness can provoke symptoms of pneumonia or kidney failure, and in rare instances, the disease can be fatal. The elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions (such as high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes) are at a higher risk of contracting the more severe strain of the illness.



2 How it spreads

How does COVID-19 spread?

The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales.

How can people catch it?

People can catch COVID-19 from other people, generally by coming into close contact with others who have the virus.

Does COVID-19 affect only the elderly or are even younger people at risk of developing the illness?

Older people and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as high blood pressure, heart disease, or diabetes) appear to develop serious illness more often than others. Nevertheless, people of all ages can be infected.

Can the Coronavirus be contracted from someone who does not present any symptoms (asymptomatic)?

According to the data currently available, those who present symptoms are the most frequent cause of transmission of the virus. The WHO (World Health Organization) considers the infection from Coronavirus before symptoms are manifested an infrequent occurrence.

Who can contract the infection?

Those living or who have recently travelled to infected areas are at a higher risk of infection. At this time, the majority of identified Coronavirus cases are occurring in China, with over 95% of the cases. In other countries, the majority of identified subjects had recently travelled to and returned from China. A few other cases emerged in those who lived or worked closely with infected individuals in China.

Can I catch COVID-19 from my pet?

No, at the moment there is no scientific evidence to confirm that domestic animals and pets such as cats and dogs have been infected or could spread the virus that causes COVID-19. As a precaution, it is recommended to wash hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub after contact with animals.



3 Symptoms and Tests

What are the symptoms of someone infected with Coronavirus?

Depending on the virus, common symptoms include fever, coughing, and respiratory difficulties. In more severe cases, the infection can develop into pneumonia, acute respiratory difficulties, and kidney failure.

Does COVID-19 infection always cause severe pneumonia?

No. COVID-19 infection can manifest with mild symptoms similar to the flu, to more severe infections such as pneumonia. It is important to underline that the majority of data is extracted from studies taken from hospitalized cases, and therefore it's possible that the proportion of cases with severe clinical symptoms at the moment is overestimated.

How long is the incubation period?

The "incubation period" means the time between catching the virus and beginning to manifest symptoms of the disease. Most estimates of the incubation period for COVID-19 range from 1 to maximum 14 days, most commonly around five days. These estimates will be updated as more data become available.

What are the differences between symptoms of influenza, a common cold and the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Symptoms of the three can overlap, and these are cough, fever and the cold. The course in the majority of cases is marked by consistent improvement. Only in specific and sporadic cases can severe symptoms manifest, chief among these respiratory difficulties. Nonetheless, they are all caused by different viruses, and if infection with COVID-19 is suspected, it is necessary to undertake exams at a laboratory to confirm a diagnosis.

Can people find out if they are infected with the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) by having blood or other tests done?

No, there are currently no existing commercial self-diagnosis kits to confirm infection with COVID-19. Diagnosis can only be confirmed by your local health care provider or facility. In the case of recent exposure to high-risk situations - such as travel to infected areas in China, or contact with people whose infection has been medically confirmed - please contact your health care provider immediately in order to receive professional advice on how to proceed.



4 Personal Protection and Preventative Measures

What can I do to protect myself?

Stay aware of the latest information on the COVID-19 outbreak, available on the WHO website and take care of your health with the following preventative measures:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If no soap and water are available, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol
- Maintain a 1 metre (3 feet) distance from others, in particular if they are coughing, sneezing or have a fever, because the virus is transmitted through drops of saliva and can be passed through the breath at close proximity
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses that can enter your body and can make you sick.
- If you have a fever, cough or difficulty breathing, and you have recently been to China or in close contact with someone returning from China and suffering from a respiratory disease, call the local hotline established by the Ministry of Health. Remember that there are several causes of respiratory diseases and the new coronavirus may be one of them.

Should I wear a mask to protect myself?

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the use of masks only for people who have symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough and fever or for those taking care of individuals who are suspected to have symptoms (recent visit to China and respiratory symptoms). Masks help limit the spread of the virus but must be adopted in addition to other hygiene measures described in the previous points. It is not helpful to wear multiple overlapping masks.

How should I wear or remove the mask?

- Clean hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water before touching the mask.
- Cover mouth and nose with the mask, ensuring that it adequately covers the face.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it. Wash your hands if you touch it.
- Take off the mask by removing the elastic loops from behind the ears and avoid touching the surface of the mask.
- Replace the mask when it gets damp and do not reuse it. Medical masks are single-use.

How long does the virus survive on surfaces?

Preliminary studies suggest that the virus may survive for a few hours on surfaces. The use of simple disinfectants, for example disinfectants containing 75% alcohol (ethanol) or chlorine-based with 1% (bleach), can kill the virus and reduce the possibility of infections.



5 Is there a vaccine, drug or treatment for COVID-19?

Is there a vaccine for COVID-19?

Being a new disease, there is no vaccine yet. It is estimated that it will take between 12 to 18 months to develop one.

Is there a treatment for COVID-19?

There is no specific treatment for the disease caused by the Novel Coronavirus. Patients should receive care specific to their symptoms, since supportive care can be very effective. Specific treatments are being tested through clinical trials.

Can antibiotics help prevent COVID-19 infections?

No. Antibiotics do not work on viruses as they are only effective on bacterial infections.



6 Other things to know

What should I do if I have recently been to an area where COVID-19 is spreading?

To contain and mitigate the spread of COVID-19, people returning to their home country, after visiting areas of the world affected by the epidemic (see updates on the WHO [situation dashboard](#)) in the past fourteen days, should communicate this to the local public health authorities. The latter will enforce a quarantine with active supervision.

What should I do if I have been in an hospital where an infected person is hospitalised?

The risk of transmission only exists if one has been in close and prolonged contact with the patient. Furthermore, those infected with the Novel Coronavirus are hospitalized in a quarantined section, away from other patients.

Is it safe to receive packages from China or other countries with confirmed cases?

Yes, it's safe. People receiving packages are not at risk of contracting the COVID-19 because it cannot survive on surfaces for a long time.

Where can I find more information on the COVID-19?

Most local Ministries of Health have a website and hotline dedicated to the management of emergencies. Consult their websites, or visit the "Rolling Updates" Section on the WHO Website and Twitter account to keep up-to-date on the COVID-19 outbreak.

For further information:

[World Health Organization website \(WHO\)](#)

[Rolling Updates section of WHO Website](#)

[WHO Twitter Account @WHO](#)

