

What Is Coronavirus?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is the disease caused by the new coronavirus that emerged in China in December 2019. It can be spread from person to person and is diagnosed with a laboratory test.

According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, diagnosis may be difficult with only a physical exam because mild cases of COVID-19 may appear similar to the flu or a bad cold.

There is no coronavirus vaccine yet. Prevention involves frequent hand-washing, coughing into the bend of your elbow and staying home when you are sick.

Here are a few frequently asked questions to help you better understand COVID-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

WHY IS THE DISEASE CALLED CORONAVIRUS AND COVID-19?

On Feb. 11, 2020 the World Health Organization announced an official name for the disease. The name of this disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was

referred to as "2019 novel coronavirus" or "2019-nCoV."

HOW DOES THE VIRUS SPREAD?

This virus was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The first infections were linked to a live animal market, according to the CDC, but the virus is now spreading from person to person.

The virus that causes

COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily in the community and in some affected geographic areas. This means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

WHO IS AT THE HIGHEST RISK FOR CONTRACTING COVID-19?

Early information out of

China shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness, including older adults, according to the CDC. People who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes and lung disease also are at higher risk.

IS THIS CORONAVIRUS DIFFERENT FROM SARS?

SARS stands for severe acute respiratory syndrome.

In 2003, an outbreak of SARS started in China and spread to other countries before ending in 2004.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is similar to the one that caused the 2003 SARS outbreak: Both are types of coronaviruses. Much is still unknown, but the CDC reports that COVID-19 seems to spread faster than the 2003 SARS and also may cause less severe illness.

COVID-19

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Symptoms and Testing

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to the flu or a severe cold. If you think you have been exposed to the virus through contact with someone else who has been affected, you should call your health care provider immediately for medical advice.

Emergency warning signs and serious symptoms include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest.
- New confusion or inability to arouse.
- Bluish lips or face.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that this list is not all-inclusive and urges Americans to consult their medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

WHEN TESTING IS NECESSARY

If you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 or you live in a community where there is ongoing spread of COVID-19 and develop symptoms of COVID-19, call your health care provider and tell them about your symptoms and your exposure. They will decide whether you need to be tested.



People who are mildly ill may be able to isolate and care for themselves at home. Your local medical professionals will be able to consider your case and deliver sound advice.

WHAT IF YOU'RE SICK?

The CDC makes the following recommendations to those feeling sick or afflicted with a mild case of COVID-19:

Stay home. People who are mildly ill with COVID-19 are able to isolate at home during their illness. You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care.

Avoid public areas. Do not go to work, school or public areas.

Avoid public transportation. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing or taxis.

CONTACTING YOUR DOCTORS

People at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 should contact their health care provider early, even if their illness is mild. This can help doctors make more informed decisions, like whether or not you should be hospitalized or if you should be tested for the virus.

The CDC reports that older

adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19.

If you are very sick, get medical attention immediately. If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19, get medical attention immediately.