Coronavirus: Key Facts to Know

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With all the information swirling around about coronavirus, it’s important to understand the facts. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by a new virus. It was first found in people in Wuhan, China, in late 2019, and has now been detected in more than 100 locations around the world, including the U.S. The latest information can be found at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov.

What Are the Symptoms?

There are actually many types of coronavirus. Most people experience these viruses at some point in their lives. Common coronaviruses usually cause mild to moderate respiratory illnesses, such as the common cold.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can appear up to 14 days after contact with the virus and may include:

* Fever or chills
* Cough
* Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
* Fatigue
* Muscle or body aches
* Headache
* New loss of taste or smell
* Sore throat
* Congestion or runny nose
* Nausea or vomiting
* Diarrhea

Some people have no symptoms or only mild symptoms. However, COVID-19 can cause severe illness such a pneumonia, leading to death in some cases.

Am I At Risk?

If you’ve been to a place where people have been sick with this virus, you are at risk for infection. Call your health care provider if you’ve been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 and you have symptoms. Call, too, if you develop symptoms and you live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

There is currently no specific medicine to treat COVID-19. Supportive treatment of severe cases may require treatment with IV fluids and oxygen.

Preventing Respiratory Illnesses

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, between people who are within about six feet from each other, through droplets of fluid that a person coughs or sneezes into the air. It may be possible to get the virus if you touch a surface or object with the virus on it and then touch your mouth, nose, or eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.  
  
The best prevention is to not have contact with COVID-19. Follow these steps, which will also help protect you from colds and flu:

* Wash your hands often. If soap and water aren’t available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
* Don’t have close contact with people who are sick.
* Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community.
* Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in places like grocery stores and pharmacies—public settings where it’s difficult to practice social distancing. Fashion your face covering from household items such as bandanas, T-shirts, or other cotton fabrics. Do not use surgical masks or N-95 respirators. These critical supplies must be reserved for health care workers.

For step-by-step instructions on how to create a homemade mask, visit **www.cdc.gov** and search for “cloth face covering tutorial.”