

## What is novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus strain spreading from person-to-person in China and other countries, including the United States. In some instances, cases outside of China have been associated with travelers from China. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

## How does COVID-19 spread?

Health experts are still learning the details. Currently, it is thought to spread:

- the air by coughing and sneezing
- close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes
- in rare cases, contact with feces

## How severe is COVID-19?

Experts are still learning about the range of illness from COVID-19. Reported cases have ranged from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires hospitalization. So far, deaths have been reported mainly in older adults who had other health conditions.

## What are the symptoms?

People who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus:

Fever



Cough



Difficulty breathing



## Who is at risk for COVID-19?

Currently the risk to the general public is low. At this time, there are a small number of individual cases in the U.S. To minimize the risk of spread, health officials are working with healthcare providers to promptly identify and evaluate any suspected cases.

Travelers to and from certain areas of the world may be at increased risk. Although coronavirus originated geographically in Wuhan, China, the disease is not specific to any ethnic group. **Chinese ancestry—or any other ancestry—does not make a person more vulnerable to this illness.**

## How can I prevent from getting COVID-19?

If you are traveling overseas (to China but also to other places) follow the CDC's guidance: [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel).

Right now, the COVID-19 has not been spreading widely in the United States, so there are no additional precautions recommended for the general public. Steps you can take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent coronavirus:

- wash hands often with soap and water often. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others
- cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing



Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent COVID-19 infections.

## How is COVID-19 treated?

There are no medications specifically approved for coronavirus. Most people with mild coronavirus illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. However, some cases develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.

**For more information:** [www.clevelandhealth.org](http://www.clevelandhealth.org)

**Updated 3/02/2020**

Adapted with permission from Public Health – Seattle & King County

