Jefferson County Health DEPARTMENT

# Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions

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## What is COVID-19 (novel coronavirus 2019)?

CDC is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in China and which has now been detected in almost 70 locations internationally, including in the United States. The virus has been named "SARS-CoV-2" and the disease it causes has been named "coronavirus disease 2019" (abbreviated "COVID-19").

On January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern" (PHEIC). On January 31, 2020, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency (PHE) for the United States to aid the nation's healthcare community in responding to COVID-19.

### How does it spread?

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Can someone spread the virus without being sick?

- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects

- It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

How easily the virus spreads

- How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (spread easily), like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained, spreading continually without stopping.

How can you help prevent the spread of the virus?

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:
    - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
    - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
    - Stay home when you are sick.
    - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
    - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
    - Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.

- CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

### Is there a treatment?

- There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.
- People who think they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

### What should you do if you are sick?

- Stay home except to get medical care
  - People who are mildly ill with COVID-19 can isolate at home during their illness. You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.
- Separate yourself from other people in your home
  - As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.
- Call ahead before visiting your doctor
  - If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
  - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or, if soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Clean your hands often
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.

  - Soap and water are the best option if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean all "high-touch" surfaces everyday
  - High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

### Stigma and Resiliency

- People—including those of Asian descent—who have not recently been in an area of ongoing spread of COVID-19 or been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 are not at greater risk of acquiring and spreading COVID-19 than other Americans.
  - Viruses cannot target people from specific populations, ethnicities, or racial backgrounds.
  - People from affected countries that live in the U.S. may be worried or anxious about friends and relatives who are living in the region. Facing stigma can make fear and anxiety worsen. Social support during this outbreak can help them cope.
- People who have returned from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19 more than 14 days ago and do not have symptoms are not infected with the virus and contact with them will not give you the virus.
  - People who have traveled to areas where the COVID-19 outbreak is happening to help have performed a valuable service to everyone by helping make sure this disease does not spread further.
  - Helping fight an outbreak can be mentally and emotionally challenging. These helpers need social support upon their return.
  - The U.S. government is responding to the outbreak and updating Travel Health Notices, as needed.

## Preparedness Planning https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html

### Before a COVID-19 outbreak occurs in your community

- A COVID-19 outbreak could last for a long time in your community. Depending on the severity of the outbreak, public health officials may recommend community actions designed to help keep people healthy, reduce exposures to COVID-19, and slow the spread of the disease. Local public health officials may make recommendations appropriate to your local situation. Creating a household plan can help protect your health and the health of those you care about in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community. You should base the details of your household plan on the needs and daily routine of your household members.

### Create a household plan of action

- Talk with the people who need to be included in your plan. Meet with household members, other relatives, and friends to discuss what to do if a COVID-19 outbreak occurs in your community and what the needs of each person will be.

- Plan ways to care for those who might be at greater risk for serious complications. There is limited information about who may be at risk for severe complications from COVID-19 illness. From the data that are available for COVID-19 patients, and from data for related coronaviruses such as SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, it is possible that older adults and persons who have underlying chronic medical conditions may be at risk for more serious complications. Early data suggest older people are more likely to have serious COVID-19 illness. If you or your household members are at increased risk for COVID-19 complications, please consult with your health care provider for more information about monitoring your health for symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. CDC will recommend actions to help keep people at high risk for complications healthy if a COVID-19 outbreak occurs in your community.
- Get to know your neighbors. Talk with your neighbors about emergency planning. If your neighborhood has a website or social media page, consider joining it to maintain access to neighbors, information, and resources.
- Identify aid organizations in your community. Create a list of local organizations that you and your household can contact in the event you need access to information, health care services, support, and resources. Consider including organizations that provide mental health or counseling services, food, and other supplies.
- Create an emergency contact list. Ensure your household has a current list of emergency contacts for family, friends, neighbors, carpool drivers, health care providers, teachers, employers, the local public health department, and other community resources.

### Practice good personal health habits and plan for home-based actions

- Practice everyday preventive actions now. Remind everyone in your household of the importance of practicing everyday preventive actions that can help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses:
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily (e.g., tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles) using a regular household detergent and water.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent and water prior to disinfection. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Always wash your hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
- Choose a room in your home that can be used to separate sick household members from those who are healthy. Identify a separate bathroom for the sick person to use, if possible. Plan to clean these rooms, as needed, when someone is sick. Learn how to care for someone with COVID-19 at home.

### Be prepared if your child's school or childcare facility is temporarily dismissed

- Learn about the emergency operations plan at your child's school or childcare facility. During a COVID-19 outbreak in your community, local public health officials may recommend temporary school dismissals to help

slow the spread of illness. School authorities also may decide to dismiss a school if too many students or staff are absent. Understand the plan for continuing education and social services (such as student meal programs) during school dismissals. If your child attends a college or university, encourage them to learn about the school's plan for a COVID-19 outbreak

### Plan for potential changes at your workplace

- Learn about your employer's emergency operations plan. Discuss sick-leave policies and telework options for workers who are sick or who need to stay home to care for sick household members. Learn how businesses and employers can plan for and respond to COVID-19.

## Message from Jefferson County Health Department: http://www.jeffcohealth.org/coronavirus-covid19

- Jefferson County Health Department (JCHD) works with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) during communicable disease outbreaks. The preparedness team; consisting of a Public Health Investigative Nurse, Epidemiologist, and Preparedness Coordinator, provides outbreak investigation and surveillance daily. The team is fully prepared to respond to this current outbreak should the need arise.
- Local Public Health Agencies, such as JCHD, will receive information on individuals that have been potentially exposed to COVID-19. JCHD staff will monitor these individuals for the duration of the disease incubation period. Monitoring will consist of daily health assessments, education about the disease and what precautionary measures need to be in place, and when needed, work with medical providers and DHSS to assess the need to test. If someone tests positive, LPHA staff will identify and communicate with all persons that had a potential for exposure.
- At this time JCHD is recommending everyone take universal precautions to avoid transmission of any virus. We ask everyone to practice proper handwashing protocol, avoid touching eyes, mouth and nose with unwashed hands, cough and sneeze into a tissue or the crook of the elbow, and stay home when sick. In addition to these precautions, we advise everyone to look at their personal preparedness plans and continuity of operations plans for organizations.
- We do not want to overwhelm our medical facilities or create unintended exposure to staff. Individuals who suspect they may have been exposed need to call their healthcare provider. Please ask residents not to report to medical facilities without calling first. If they do not need immediate medical care, please call their healthcare provider to assess their needs prior to visiting a medical facility.

# Trusted Resources for Information and Planning

Jefferson County Health Department
http://www.jeffcohealth.org/coronavirus-covid19
General COVID-19 Worksheet:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf
Specific guidance for Businesses:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html
Specific guidance for Homes:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html
Specific guidance for Work:
https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/workplace/index.html
Specific guidance for Childcare and K-12 Schools
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html
Specific guidance for Colleges and Universities
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities.html
Specific guidance for Healthcare Facilities
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/index.html
Specific guidance for First Responders
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/first-responders.html
Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/
Coronavirus COVID-19 Global Cases by Johns Hopkins CSSE
https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6
COVID-19: US at a Glance
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html