



APHA's Get Ready campaign helps Americans prepare themselves, their families and their communities for all disasters and hazards, including pandemic flu, infectious disease, natural disasters and other emergencies.

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COVID-19: Get the facts on the 2019 coronavirus

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In December 2019, health officials found that people in Wuhan, China, were getting sick from a respiratory illness. Scientists determined it was caused by a new — or “novel” — coronavirus that had not been found before. The disease, which is named COVID-19, has since been reported in many other countries, including the U.S.

U.S. and global health officials are keeping a close watch on the disease. People should not travel to places where COVID-19 is being transmitted unless it is necessary.

What are the symptoms? How does it spread?

The symptoms of infection with COVID-19 are usually a respiratory illness with fever, cough and difficulty breathing. The disease can be fatal.

COVID-19 can spread from person-to-person.

Coronaviruses in general can be spread through the air by coughing and sneezing and through close personal contact, such as shaking hands, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coronaviruses can also be spread by touching an object or surface with the virus on it and then your eyes, mouth or nose.

How is the COVID-19 treated?

There is no vaccine for COVID-19. There is also no antiviral treatment.

If you travel to an area with an outbreak of COVID-19 — or if you have been in close contact with someone who has the disease — and you develop symptoms, you should talk to your doctor. But be sure to call ahead before going to their office. Your health team will tell you what steps to take next.

How can I protect myself from COVID-19?

The best way to prevent infection from COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed to it. That means staying away from outbreak areas and people who have been infected.

You can also take everyday actions that help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do not come in close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough. Throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands afterward.
- Stay home when you are sick.

Where can I get more information?

CDC and the World Health Organization offer information on the disease, including travel information and updated case details.

Visit www.cdc.gov and www.who.int.

More information

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