

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Prevention

Definition

- COVID-19 is a viral respiratory infection. It may be widespread in your community.
- Because it can be serious, you don't want your family to catch it.
- Here are some tips on how to protect your family.

COVID-19 - How it is Spread

- COVID-19 is spread from person to person.
- The virus spreads from respiratory droplets produced when a person coughs or sneezes. The infected droplets can then be inhaled by a nearby person or land on the surface of their eyes.
- Most infected people also have respiratory secretions on their hands. These secretions get transferred to healthy people on doorknobs, faucet handles etc. The virus then gets transferred to healthy people when they touch their face or rub their eyes.
- These methods are how most respiratory viruses spread.

COVID-19 Basics

- COVID-19 Symptoms: The most common symptoms are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Less common symptoms are muscle aches, chills, headache, sore throat, runny nose and even diarrhea.
- Incubation Period for Symptoms: average 5 days (range 2 to 14 days) after coming in contact with a person who has COVID-19.
- Mild Infections: 80% have a mild illness, much like normal flu or a bad cold. The symptoms usually last 2 weeks.
- No Symptoms but Infected: About 20% of infected patients have no symptoms.
- Severe Infections: 20% of those with symptoms develop trouble breathing from viral pneumonia. Many of these patients need to be admitted to the hospital. People with complications generally recover in 3 to 6 weeks.
- Deaths: Children generally have a mild illness and recover quickly. Pediatric deaths are very rare. Older adults, especially those with chronic lung disease or weak immune systems, have the highest death rates. The overall death rate is around 1%.
- Vaccine: There currently is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. Many labs are working on developing a vaccine, but that will take at least a year.
- Treatment: Currently, there are no effective anti-viral medicines. Treatment is supportive. Oxygen and IV fluids are used for hospitalized patients. Some patients need to be placed on a ventilator machine to help their breathing.

Trusted Sources for Accurate COVID-19 Information - CDC and AAP

- Nurse call centers and doctors' offices are overloaded with calls. They need to keep their lines open for sick patients.
- To meet the extreme demand for COVID-19 information, when possible, find your answers online. Here are the most reliable websites:
- CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>
- American Academy of Pediatrics parent website: www.healthychildren.org
- Nurse advice lines and medical call centers are needed for sick patient calls.

Care Advice

1. COVID-19 Prevention by Social Distancing and Staying Home:

- Avoid any contact with people known to have COVID-19 infection. Avoid talking to or sitting close to them.
- Social Distancing: Try to stay at least 6 feet away from anyone who is sick, especially if they are coughing. Also called physical distancing. Avoid crowds because you can't tell who might be sick.
- If COVID-19 becomes widespread in your community, try to stay 6 feet away from everyone outside your family unit.
- Follow any stay at home (stay in place) orders in your community or state. Leave your home only for essential needs such as buying food or seeking medical care.
- Being outdoors for exercise is generally safe. That includes going for a walk, but keeping a safe distance from others.
- No longer shake hands. Greet others with a smile and a nod.
- Avoid ERs and urgent care clinics if you don't need to go there. These are places where you are likely to be exposed to infections.
- Masks: At first, the CDC did not recommend wearing a face mask, unless you were sick. As community spread became high, they recommended face masks for everyone going into public buildings, such as for buying groceries.

2. COVID-19 Prevention by Handwashing and Other Good Health Habits:

- Wash hands often with soap and water (very important). Wash for at least 20 seconds.
- Important times to wash hands: before you eat, after coming home from shopping or other public places, after any contact with friends, after using the rest room, if your hands have been used for covering a cough or sneeze.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if water is not available. Remember: Soap and water work better.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth unless your hands are clean. Germs on the hands can get into your body this way.
- Don't share glasses, plates or eating utensils with other family members.

3. Keep Your Body Strong:

- Get your body ready to fight the COVID-19 virus.
- Get enough sleep (very important).
- Keep your heart strong. Walk or exercise every day. Take the stairs. Caution: Avoid physical exhaustion.
- Stay well hydrated.
- Eat healthy meals. Avoid overeating to deal with your fears.
- Avoid the over-use of anti-fever medicines. Fever fights infections and ramps up your immune system.

4. **Keep Your Mind Positive:**

- Live in the present, not the future. The future is where your needless worries live. Stay positive.
- Use a mantra to reduce your fears, such as "I am strong".
- Go to a park if you have one. Being in nature is good for your immune system.
- As long as they are well, hug your children and partner frequently. Speak to them in a kind and loving voice. Love strengthens your immune system.
- Use regular phone calls and video chats to stay in touch with those you love.

5. **How to Protect Others - When You or Your Child are Sick:**

- Stay home from school or work if you are sick. Your doctor or local health department will tell you when it is safe to return.
- Cough and sneeze into your shirt sleeve or inner elbow. Don't cough into your hand or the air.
- If available, sneeze into a tissue and throw it into trash can.
- Wash hands often with soap and water. After coughing or sneezing are important times.
- Don't share glasses, plates or eating utensils.
- Wear a face mask when around others.
- Always wear a face mask (if available) if you have to leave your home (such as going to a medical facility). Always call first to get approval and careful directions.

Call Your Doctor Back If...

- You think you or your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

This handout is intended for informational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for the care and advice of a medical professional. The accuracy of the information contained in this handout is not guaranteed and there may be variations in treatment that your doctor or nurse may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

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