



## **Coronavirus 101 - What You Need to Know**

## Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Course Overview	3
Understanding COVID-19	3
How COVID-19 Spreads	3
Symptoms of COVID-19	3
Prevention & Treatment of COVID-19	4
If You Become Sick	4
Conclusion	6
Summary and Implications	6
Resources	6
Supporting Materials	6
References	6

## Introduction

### Course Overview

Protecting your health against the Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, starts with getting the right information.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify how COVID-19 spreads
- Recognize its symptoms
- Explain how to prevent and treat the virus, and
- Determine what to do if you become sick with COVID-19

## Understanding COVID-19

### How COVID-19 Spreads

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person 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. 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. 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.

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (meaning they spread easily), like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained. The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread easily in the community, which is known as (“community spread”) in some affected geographic areas. *Community spread* means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

### Symptoms of COVID-19

For confirmed coronavirus cases, reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough, and
- Shortness of breath

According to the CDC, symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

## Prevention & Treatment of COVID-19

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. However, as a reminder, the CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions. Specifically, this means you should:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating, and after going to the bathroom; blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not readily available. Always wash your hands with soap and water if they are visibly dirty.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Follow the CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.

The 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 healthcare facility).

For additional guidance on handwashing, information relating to healthcare, and specific recommendations for travelers, please see the resources section of this course.

There is currently 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.

### If You Become Sick

If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, follow these steps to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

- Stay home, except to get medical care.

You should avoid all activities outside your home, except for getting the medical attention you need. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

- Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home.

As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. If available, you should use a separate bathroom. You should also restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with the virus, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus.

- Call ahead before visiting your doctor.

If you have a medical appointment, call your 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.

- Wear a facemask.

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (such as sharing a room or vehicle) or pets, and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

- 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 or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Clean your hands often and thoroughly.

Practice frequent, effective hand-washing. When washing your hands with soap and water, wash for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands with the sanitizer, rubbing them together until they feel dry. Hand sanitizer is not enough if your hands are visibly dirty - soap and water should always be used. Of course, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Avoid sharing personal household items.

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

- 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.

- Monitor your symptoms.

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (such as difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help prevent further exposure, keeping the healthcare provider and their patients safe. If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low; the decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

## Conclusion

### Summary and Implications

The Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, should be taken seriously. By ensuring that you understand how it spreads, how to recognize its symptoms, and how to prevent the spread of this deadly virus, you are taking actions to keep you and your family safe.

## Resources

### Supporting Materials

For information about handwashing, see [CDC's Handwashing](#) website.

For information specific to healthcare, see [CDC's Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings](#).

These are everyday habits that can help prevent the spread of several viruses. CDC does have [specific guidance for travelers](#).

### References

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>