

COVID-19

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Apr. 7

Frequently Asked Questions

Is COVID-19 a new disease?

Although the virus that causes COVID-19 likely has been in animals for some time, this is a new human illness. It likely originated when the virus was transmitted from bats to humans in a food market in Wuhan, China.

When did COVID-19 first emerge?

COVID-19 first began in December, and it now has affected individuals in more than 209 countries.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Individuals who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 may show a range of symptoms, from mild symptoms that one commonly has with the common cold to more severe symptoms that include fever, lack of energy, body aches and diarrhea. In more severe cases, individuals develop a pneumonia and can have difficulty breathing.

How is COVID-19 transmitted?

COVID-19 is transmitted by respiratory droplets. Its transmission is very similar to the common cold and influenza. Individuals can contract COVID-19 from another individual through coughing or sneezing, or through contact with the virus on their hands and then bringing the hands close to their nose or mouth.

How is COVID-19 prevented?

The best way to prevent COVID-19 is by taking standard precautions. Standard precautions include the following:

- 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, and then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Be mindful of cafeteria etiquette:
 - Do not refill drinks from a cup you have been drinking from.
 - Avoid touching utensils that others may be using.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially:
 - After going to the bathroom.
 - Before and after eating.
 - After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
 - If hands are visibly dirty.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer.

How is COVID-19 treated?

At present there is no specific treatment for COVID-19. Because this is a viral illness, antibiotics are not effective. There is currently an intense rush to develop a more specific antiviral treatment.

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FAQ (continued)

Is there a vaccine for COVID-19?

Although many scientists and pharmaceutical companies are working on a vaccine, it is unlikely that an effective vaccine will be available to the public before 18 months.

Is a flu vaccine recommended?

If you have not received the flu vaccine, it is strongly recommended to get one. At present in the United States, we are in the midst of a second wave of influenza, and the symptoms may be very similar to COVID-19. Influenza can weaken the immune system, and it is likely that the combination of influenza with COVID-19 would lead to a more serious illness than either condition alone.

Who is most vulnerable to COVID-19?

At present, the clinical evidence tells us that those who are most vulnerable to developing severe or lethal cases of COVID-19 are the elderly or individuals who are frail or suffer with cardiac conditions or diabetes.

Should I wear a mask to prevent COVID-19?

CDC recommends individuals wear cloth face coverings or masks when out in public settings where it is difficult to maintain physical distancing (grocery stores and pharmacy) and in areas where there is community-based transmission. Surgical masks and N95 masks are not recommended for the general public.

Who is likely to transmit COVID-19?

Recent studies have shown that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms. Therefore, it is important to maintain physical distance (about 6 feet) to prevent spread.