



What is the coronavirus?

- Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can cause respiratory infections.
- Coronaviruses have nothing to do with Corona beer, besides the name. “Corona” means “crown”, and the viruses are so called because of their spiky appearance.
- You've probably had a coronavirus before! The most common kind of coronavirus infection is the common cold!
- Rarer kinds of coronavirus can cause more serious infections, such as SARS.
- The coronavirus in the news is a new kind not seen before, called **COVID-19** (short for “coronavirus disease 2019”).
- Because it is new, we are still learning about COVID-19 and how to fight it.

Symptoms of COVID-19

- COVID-19 causes respiratory illness, which can range from mild to severe
- The main symptoms of COVID-19 are **fever, cough, and shortness of breath**
- Some people who get COVID-19 may get more severe complications, such as pneumonia, multi-organ failure, and in some cases death
- People at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 are:
 - Older adults
 - People with serious chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease

Who is at risk of getting COVID-19?

You may be exposed to COVID-19 if:

- You have been in close contact with someone known to have COVID-19, or
- You have recently been in an area with a current outbreak

People of Asian descent are **not** more likely than anyone else to get COVID-19.

As of 3/16/2020, COVID-19 is not widespread in the United States.

Regions with widespread ongoing outbreaks of COVID-19 (as of 3/16/2020) are China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, and most of Europe (including Ireland and the United Kingdom)

The situation may change over time, as the infection may spread in new countries or become controlled in countries where it was once a problem. For the most up-to-date info about global risk of COVID-19, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

What is “community spread?”

Community spread refers to spread of a disease without known contact with someone who has it or may have carried it from its original source.

Public health authorities watch for community spread because frequent cases of community spread indicate an infection is established in an area rather than just being brought in from another place.



How can I avoid coronavirus?

- Wash your hands **often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Coronaviruses have an oily coating that is destroyed by soap or alcohol, killing the virus.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid unnecessary travel, especially to areas with widespread COVID-19 or on cruise ships.
- Try to avoid going out in crowded public spaces where you may be exposed to disease, especially if you're at higher risk of getting very sick.



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What should I do if I'm sick?

If you have (or think you may have) COVID-19, follow these steps to avoid spreading the virus to others:

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid going out, except to get medical care.
- If possible, isolate yourself from other people in your home. Stay in a specific room away from others, and use a separate bathroom.
- Wear a face mask to contain any droplets that may spread the virus to others.
- Wash your hands **often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and wash your hands afterward.
- Avoid sharing personal items with others, including dishes, drinking glasses, eating utensils, towels, and bedding.
- Clean “high-touch” surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, toilets, phones, tablets, and keyboards, with household cleaners every day.
- **Call ahead** before visiting your doctor, whether for this illness or any routine appointment. Let them know that you have, or may have, COVID-19.
- Call your doctor if your illness gets worse (e.g., difficulty breathing).

What about masks?

Surgical masks and other commonly-available face masks are **not effective** at protecting you from exposure to the coronavirus.



Face masks *are* effective at protecting *other people* from your germs. If you are feeling sick, wearing a mask can help protect others

around you. But if people who are well buy masks, it won't keep them from getting sick – but it could hurt the healthcare system! Healthcare workers rely on masks to avoid spreading germs that would normally be harmless to vulnerable patients who might get sick from them, such as chemotherapy patients or people undergoing surgery.

How to find the latest info

COVID-19 is a very new disease, and the situation is still rapidly evolving. Public health authorities are hard at work tracking the disease and making sure appropriate safeguards are in place to reduce its spread and potential harm.

For the latest information and recommendations, visit the CDC's COVID-19 homepage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>