

# FAQs & Answers:

## **What is COVID-19/Coronavirus?**

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

## **What is a novel coronavirus?**

A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the [coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans](#) and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

## **Is COVID-19 the same as SARS?**

No. The virus that causes COVID-19 and the one that caused the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003 are related to each other genetically, but the diseases they cause are quite different.

## **What are the symptoms?**

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

Some people infected with the virus have reported experiencing other non-respiratory symptoms. Other people, referred to as asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all.

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

## **How can you get it, how does it spread, and how is it transmitted?**

This virus was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The first infections were linked to a live animal market, but the virus is now spreading from person-to-person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community ("community spread"). 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.

Because the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person, someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 can spread the illness to others. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or

sneezes. It also 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.

### **How long does the virus survive on surfaces?**

It is not certain how long the virus that causes COVID-19 survives on surfaces, but it seems to behave like other coronaviruses. Studies suggest that coronaviruses (including preliminary information on the COVID-19 virus) may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. This may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment).

If you think a surface may be infected, clean it with a simple disinfectant to kill the virus and protect yourself and others. Clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose.

### **Am I at risk?**

This is a rapidly evolving situation and the [risk assessment](#) may change daily. Nonetheless, early information out of China, where COVID-19 first started, shows that [some people are at higher risk](#) of getting very sick from this illness including older adults, and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease.

### **How likely am I to catch COVID-19 (coronavirus)?**

For most people in most locations the risk of catching COVID-19 is still low. However, there are now places around the world (cities or areas) where the disease is spreading. For people living in, or visiting, these areas the risk of catching COVID-19 is higher. Governments and health authorities are taking vigorous action every time a new case of COVID-19 is identified. Be sure to comply with any local restrictions on travel, movement or large gatherings. Cooperating with disease control efforts will reduce your risk of catching or spreading COVID-19.

### **Is there a vaccine or cure?**

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) or treatment specifically approved for COVID-19, although treatments and vaccines are currently under study. Instead, treatment focuses on managing symptoms as the virus runs its course.

Seek immediate medical help if you think you have COVID-19. Your doctor will recommend treatment for any symptoms or complications that develop.

### **What about antibiotics? Can they be effective in preventing or treating the COVID-19?**

No. Antibiotics do not work against viruses, they only work on bacterial infections. COVID-19 is caused by a virus, so antibiotics do not work. Antibiotics should not be used as a means of prevention or treatment of COVID-19. They should only be used as directed by a physician to treat a bacterial infection.

### **How is Coronavirus (COVID-19) diagnosed?**

COVID-19 can be diagnosed similarly to other conditions caused by viral infections: using a blood, saliva, or tissue sample. Currently, the United States can test for it in numerous state and local public health labs. Please contact your doctor for information on where you can get tested if you are feeling ill.

### **Should I be tested for COVID-19?**

If you develop symptoms such as fever, cough, and/or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or have recently traveled from an area with an ongoing spread of COVID-19, stay home and call your healthcare provider. Older patients and individuals who have severe underlying medical conditions or are immunocompromised should contact their healthcare provider early, even if their illness is mild. If you have severe symptoms, such as persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, or bluish lips or face, contact your healthcare provider or emergency room and seek care immediately. Your doctor will determine if you have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and whether you should be tested.

### **How do I protect myself?**

The best way to prevent the spread of infection is to avoid or limit contact with people who are showing symptoms of COVID-19 or any respiratory infection.

The next best thing you can do is practice good hygiene to prevent bacteria and viruses from spreading. This includes:

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

### **What do I do if I am sick?**

If you experience any of the symptoms above or have been in close contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19, please cancel your appointment and call your doctor right away.

### **What do I do if I live with someone or knowingly have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with coronavirus, but I feel fine?**

Household members, intimate partners, and caregivers in a non-healthcare setting may have close contact with a person with symptomatic, laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 or a person under investigation. Close contacts should monitor their health; they should call their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. If you are not symptomatic, please follow the CDC's [recommended precautions for household members, intimate partners, and caregivers in a nonhealthcare setting](#) of:

A patient with symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 OR a patient under investigation.

**Do I need to wear a mask?**

If you are NOT sick you do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

**If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to email us at [hello@balancedflow.today](mailto:hello@balancedflow.today).**

## Helpful Resources:

[The Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)

[The World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)

[Illinois Department of Public Health](#)

[Chicago Department of Public Health](#)

Signup for the Chicago Department of Public Health's [email list](#) and be among the first to receive press releases, current guidance, and other important information regarding COVID-19.