**Q: I am concerned about Coronavirus? What can you tell me about this Coronavirus?**

**A:** Some of the things we know today are likely to be fluid subject to change as we learn more, but our goal is to keep you updated and informed. During an outbreak with a new virus or any new disease, there is often a lot of uncertainty.  Our Clinical team along with your providers continue to watch and listen to updates from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) as well as the WHO (World Health Organization), so we can share and support patients with the most up to day guidance and advice from the experts leading the fight against emerging health issues. The biggest key right now remains prevention.

**Q: What do you know about the Coronavirus today?**

**A:** Today, the CDC indicates they are now seeing community spread in the US.  Though mostly localized in small pockets at this time, there are some outbreak pockets all across different communities in the US. The CDC continues to share several measures that they are working on to contain this disease and also the strategies they are employing to minimize the impact on our communities.

**Q: I’m scared, what can I do avoid this Coronavirus?**

**A:** Although there is no ‘one’ thing you can do to avoid the virus, many of the same precautions that are recommended during the influenza (FLU) season, is applicable for protecting yourself from Coronavirus:

* AVOID HANDSHAKING. Limit your exposure and physical interactions with the general public and even friends or acquaintances who you think may have not been exposed. Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups, utensils, etc. Utilize non-physical gestures when interacting in situations whenever possible.
* Beware of your use and touch of light switches, door handles, elevator buttons, etc. Try lifting gasoline dispenser with a paper towel, and wash your hands as often as possible/use 60%+ Hand Sanitizer after touching public surfaces. Especially important on bathroom door handles and other commercial doors.
* Keep a bottle of sanitizer available at each of your home and/or office entrances, AND in your car for use after getting gas or touching other contaminated objects when you can't immediately wash your hands.
* Use disinfectant wipes at the stores when they are available, including wiping the handle and child seat in grocery carts and shopping baskets. Avoiding touching eyes, noses, and mouths.
* WASH YOUR HANDS, OFTEN, with soap at least 20 seconds and/or use a greater than 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer whenever you return home from ANY activity that involves locations where other people have been.
* If possible, cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue and discard. Use your elbow only if you have to. The clothing on your elbow will contain infectious virus that can be passed on for up to a week or more!

**Q: Is there anything else I can do? I don’t get this virus?**

**A:** The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. This may also include even limiting travel, if possible, especially to any known infected areas. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, which includes the Coronavirus, and these include:

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

CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including Coronavirus. **Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms** of Coronavirus 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 health care facility).

**Q: Is there a vaccine or any medication I can get to prevent me from getting the Coronavirus?**

**A:** At this time, no, there is no vaccine to protect against this new virus and no medications approved to treat it.  Non-pharmaceutical interventions will be the most important tools to response to this virus, right now.  These interventions will likely vary depending on local conditions, and this proactive approach of containment and mitigation will help delay the spread in the United States. Ultimately, some of these interventions are better than none.  Some of these non-medication related inventions include:

* *Personal interventions*- or personal protective measures you can take every day and are the same preventive measures recommended during influenza (Flu) season. ***(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, then throw the tissue in the trash. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning product.)***
* *Community interventions*- which include social distancing measures designed to keep people who are sick away from others.  These are practical measures that can help limit exposure by reducing exposure in community settings.  For adults, businesses can replace in-person meetings with video or telephone conferences and increase teleworking options.  On a larger scale, communities may need to modify, postpone, or cancel mass gatherings, such as church services, concerts, etc. Additionally, community interventions could include consistently cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects at school, at work, and at large gatherings.

Some interventions that may be most effective in reducing the spread of a new virus like school closures are also the most likely to be associated with unwanted consequences and further disruptions.  Secondary consequences of some of these measures might include missed work and loss of income.  I understand this whole situation may seem overwhelming and that disruption to everyday life may be severe.  But that is why, along with the CDC, we are encouraging everyone to at least start thinking about prevention measure now.

**Q: What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?**

**A**: Symptoms can include: Fever, Cough, Shortness of breath PLUS (+) recent exposure or recent travel to an area with Coronavirus or with an infected person. Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Illness due to Coronavirus infection is generally mild, especially for children and young adults. However, it can cause serious illness: about 1 in every 5 people who catch it need hospital care. The CDC believes at this time that symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

**Q: I think I might have the virus, where to I go and how can I get tested?**

**A**: Call your PCP or healthcare provider if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have Coronavirus or has been recently exposed. Please, **Do Not** rush to the Emergency Department, unless you are acutely or emergently ill. If your symptoms are mild and you are feeling ill, keep yourself at home, and as separate from other people as possible. Your healthcare provider or PCP will work with your state’s public health department and the CDC to determine if you need to be tested. Going into a clinic, hospital, Emergency Room, or other location increases the chance of unintended exposure of others, further spreading the virus.

**Q: I haven’t been feeling well, how do I know if I have Coronavirus or not?**
**A:** The CDC has released several clinical features along with risks to evaluate when thinking about your own health and symptoms you have:

Any patient meeting criteria for evaluation for Coronavirus, Step # 1 is to contact your local or state health department. Patients should be evaluated and discussed with public health departments on a case-by-case basis. For severely ill individuals, testing can be considered when exposure history is equivocal (e.g., uncertain travel or exposure, or no known exposure) and another etiology has not been identified.

| **Clinical Features and Individual Risk for Coronavirus** |
| --- |
| **Clinical Features** | **&** | **Individual Risks** |
| Fever[1](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html#foot1) **or** signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath) | **AND** | Any person, who has had close contact[2](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html#foot2) with a laboratory-confirmed[3](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html#foot3)[,4](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html#foot4) 2019-nCoV patient within 14 days of symptom onset |
| Fever[1](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html#foot1) **and** signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) | **AND** | A history of travel from **Hubei Province**, **China**[5](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html#foot5) within 14 days of symptom onset |
| Fever[1](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html#foot1) **and**signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) requiring hospitalization[4](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html#foot4) | **AND** | A history of travel from mainland **China**[**5**](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html#foot5) within 14 days of symptom onset |

**Q: I’ve heard I should stock up on supplies? What should I keep in my house incase this gets worse?**
**A:** At this time, there does not appear to be any concern about our nations water supply or other more specific items in our day to day life. However, in preparation for any type of pandemic disease spread in the US:

* Stock up on tissues, toilet paper, etc. This virus is spread in large droplets by coughing and sneezing. This means that the air will not infect you! BUT all the surfaces where these droplets land are infectious for about a week on average.
* Stock up with hand sanitizers and latex/nitrile gloves (get the appropriate sizes for your family). The hand sanitizers must be alcohol-based and greater than 60% alcohol to be effective.
* Stock up disinfectant wipes and/or disinfectant sprays.
* Stock up on non-perishable food in case you come down with illness and have to stay home.

**For more info:**

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

**Additional Q & A from the World Health Organization (WHO):**

**<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>**

**Sources:**

* [**https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html**](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)
* [**https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200226-sitrep-37-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=6126c0a4\_2**](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200226-sitrep-37-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=6126c0a4_2)