



CORONA VIRUS AWARENESS

S Y M P T O M S

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

THIS INFORMATION IS FROM THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

Coronavirus and Covid-19

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes the COVID-19 disease. The symptoms or common signs of infection by the currently spreading coronavirus include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, tiredness, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

But the symptoms of the coronavirus are usually mild and begin gradually. Around 1 out of every 6 people who develop COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and have difficulty in breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. People with fever, cough and have difficulty in breathing should seek medical attention.

How does COVID-19 spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person.



HIGH FEVER



COUGH



SORE TROATH



HEADACHE

Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also be infected if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1 meter away from a person who is sick. But the risk of being infected by someone with no symptoms at all is very low, although it is possible to catch COVID-19 from someone who has, for example, just a mild cough and does not feel ill.

According to the WHO older persons and persons with pre-existing medical conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes appear to develop serious illness more often than others. The WHO says that studies up to now suggest that the virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through contact with respiratory droplets rather than through the air.

What can I do to protect myself and prevent the spread of disease?

Stay aware of the latest information on the COVID-19 outbreak from the government. You can reduce the chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
- Maintain at least 1 metre distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing. Why? When someone coughs or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in droplets, including the virus if the person coughing has the disease.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.
- Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your



WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN



WEAR A FACE MASK



AVOID CONTACT WITH SICK PEOPLE



ALWAYS COVER YOUR COUGH OR SNEEZE

P R E V E N T I O N

mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then put away the used tissue immediately. Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

- Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and experience difficulty in breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions from government or the nearest health facilities as they would have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.
- If possible, avoid traveling to places – especially if you are an older person or have diabetes, heart or lung disease. Why? You have a higher chance of catching the coronavirus in one of these areas.

Protection measures for persons who are in or have recently visited areas where COVID-19 is spreading over the past 14 days.

- Self-isolate by staying at home if you begin to feel unwell, even with mild symptoms such as headache, low grade fever (37.3 C or above) and slight runny nose, until you recover. If it is essential for you to have someone bring you supplies or to go out, e.g. to buy food, then wear a mask to avoid infecting other people. Why? Avoiding contact with others and visits to medical facilities will allow these facilities to operate more effectively and help protect you and others from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.
- If you develop fever, cough and have difficulty in breathing, seek medical advice promptly as this may be due to a respiratory infection or other serious condition. Call in advance and tell your provider of any recent travel or contact with travellers. Why? Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also help to prevent possible spread of COVID-19 and other viruses.

How likely am I to catch COVID-19?

The risk depends on where you are and more specifically, whether there is evidence of a COVID-19 outbreak in a particular area. For most people in most locations the risk of catching COVID-19 is still low. For people living in or visiting these areas the risk of catching COVID-19 is high. Please comply with any local restrictions on travel, movement or large gatherings if and when they are declared. Cooperating with disease control efforts will reduce your risk of catching or spreading COVID-19. COVID-19 outbreaks can be contained and transmission stopped, as has been shown in China and some other countries. Unfortunately, new outbreaks can emerge rapidly. It's important to be aware of the situation where you are or intend to go.

Who is at risk of developing severe illness?

According to the WHO older persons and persons with pre-existing medical conditions (such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes) appear to develop serious illness more often than others.

Are antibiotics 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 and so they must not be used. They should only be used as directed by a doctor to treat a bacterial infection.

Are there any medicines or therapies that can prevent or cure COVID-19?

While some western, traditional or home remedies may provide comfort and alleviate symptoms of COVID-19, there is no evidence that current medicine can prevent or cure the disease. WHO does not recommend self-medication with any medicines, including antibiotics as a prevention or cure for COVID-19. It must be understood that there is no vaccine, drug or treatment for COVID-19? However, those affected should receive care to relieve symptoms. People with serious illness should be hospitalized. Most patients recover thanks to supportive care. The WHO is coordinating efforts to develop vaccines and medicines to prevent and treat COVID-19.

Should I wear a mask to protect myself?

Only wear a mask if you are ill with COVID-19 symptoms (especially coughing) or looking after someone who may have COVID-19. Disposable face mask can only be used once. WHO advises rational use of medical masks to avoid unnecessary wastage of precious resources and misuse of the masks.

How long is the incubation period for COVID-19?

The “incubation period” means the time between catching the virus and beginning to have symptoms of the disease. Most estimates of the incubation period for COVID-19 range from 1-14 days, most commonly around five days.

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 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.

Is it safe to receive a package from any area where COVID-19 has been reported?

Yes. According to the WHO, the likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, travelled, and exposed to different conditions and temperature is low.

**CORONA VIRUS OUTBREAK
24-HOUR HOTLINE NUMBER:**

08 000 29999