

COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) Fact Sheet

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a virus strain (SARS-CoV-2) first detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019. The virus has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people, although most people will only suffer minor symptoms.

How severe is COVID-19?

Most COVID-19 illnesses are mild with fever and cough. The vast majority of people with coronavirus infection do not require hospital care. A much smaller percentage of people get severely ill with respiratory problems like pneumonia. Elderly people and people with underlying medical conditions are at highest risk.

How does COVID-19 spread?

Health experts are still learning the details. Currently, COVID-19 is thought to spread:

- Via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

It is cold and flu season, and symptoms to COVID-19 are similar. Having these symptoms does not mean you have the COVID-19. People who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus. Please familiarize yourself with the symptoms:

- Fever
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Shortness of breath and difficulty breathing
- Early symptoms such as chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, and runny nose

Note: If you are worried about your symptoms, please consult with a healthcare professional.

When should you seek medical evaluation and advice?

If you have symptoms like fever, cough, or other respiratory problems, contact your regular doctor first. Do not go to the emergency room. Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs. If you have difficulty breathing, it doesn't mean you have novel coronavirus, but you should call 911. If you're over 60 and you have underlying conditions like diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease, come up with a plan with your doctor to identify your health risks for coronavirus and how to manage symptoms. Contact your doctor right away if you do have symptoms.

Reduce the Risks

Preventing the spread of any virus is key to minimizing individual and community impacts. Some actions the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend to help reduce the risk of infection and spread of the disease include:

- If sick (fever/cough) **STAY HOME**
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Cover your sneeze or cough with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash immediately and wash your hands
- Wash your hands often throughout the day
- Get in the habit of NOT touching your face – eyes, nose, and mouth
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe. Don't forget phones, keyboards, and door handles
- Clean your work area at least once, ideally twice a day.
- Eat healthy and stay hydrated
- Get plenty of rest

Be Prepared

To prepare for an outbreak or sudden increase in the number of cases locally, staff should consider:

- Having a plan to care for family members when schools, daycares, or senior centers are closed
- Having 3 to 4 weeks of non-perishable food, medications and personal items at home so trips to the grocery store can be limited or avoided
- Cleaning your living area more often, including wiping down small electronics, door handles, and other items commonly touched by many people

Additional Information

For accurate official information and guidance related to the status of COVID-19 it is recommended to seek information from the CDC, the State of Minnesota Department of Health and Ramsey County Public Health:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus Disease 2019 page
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- State of Minnesota Department of Health Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) page
 - <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>
- Ramsey County Department of Public Health Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) page
 - <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/health-medical/current-health-issues/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>