

# COVID-19 Fact Sheet for Families

## What is novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus strain spreading from person-to-person. Health experts are concerned because this new virus can cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people — especially people over age 60, people with certain health conditions (such as heart or lung disease, or diabetes) or weakened immune systems, and pregnant people.

## What are the common symptoms of COVID-19?

Most coronavirus illnesses are mild with fever and cough. Most people with COVID-19 do not require hospital care. Adults and children with COVID-19 have reported the following symptoms or combinations of symptoms. [The symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus:](#)

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Or at least *two* of these symptoms:

- Fever\*
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Other signs of new illness that are unrelated to a preexisting condition (such as seasonal allergies)

Children with COVID-19 usually have milder symptoms. We don't know yet whether some children may be at higher risk for severe illness, like children with underlying medical conditions and special health care needs. To learn more about COVID-19, visit [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

## How is COVID-19 spread?

Health experts are still learning more about how COVID-19 spreads. Currently experts think the virus spreads when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks close to other people. Droplets can enter the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or can be inhaled by people who are in close contact with one another. Close contact means being within [6 feet of someone for about 10 minutes, or if someone with COVID-19 coughed on you, kissed you, shared utensils with you, or you had direct contact with their body secretions.](#)

[The virus can also spread when a person touches a surface that has the novel coronavirus on it and then touches their own mouth, eyes, or nose.](#) People infected with COVID-19 are thought to be most contagious when they are feeling sick, but it is possible that they can pass the virus to others up to 48 hours before symptoms begin.

## How is COVID-19 treated?

There are no medications specifically approved for COVID-19. Most people with mild COVID-19 illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever-reducing medications. However, some cases develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization. Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent COVID-19 infections.

## Who is at risk for severe illness from COVID-19?

Children are not currently a high-risk group for serious illness from this virus. Some children have certain health conditions, such as diabetes or weakened immune systems that put them at higher risk. People who are considered most at risk are those 60 years or older, people with health conditions such as heart or lung disease, diabetes, or weakened immune systems, and pregnant people.

## How can I protect myself and my family from COVID-19?

The best ways to protect yourself and your family are to:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If not available, use hand sanitizer (60% alcohol or greater). Do not use sanitizer with children under age two.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects (like doorknobs and light switches). Regular household cleaners are effective.
- Follow Public Health's recommendations for slowing the spread of COVID-19, including working from home when possible, avoiding large gatherings, and practicing physical distancing by trying to stay 6 feet away from others when possible.

If you or your family are traveling overseas, check for the latest CDC Travel Alerts for COVID at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/>.

## What should I do if someone in my family has confirmed or suspected COVID-19?

- Anyone who is sick should stay home.
- If someone in your family has symptoms of COVID-19, call your healthcare provider.
- If someone in your household tests positive for COVID-19, tell your childcare provider.
- [Anyone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 should remain at home and away from others for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms AND 72 hours \(3 days\) after fever has resolved \(without fever-reducing medication\) AND symptoms have improved.](#)
- Children diagnosed with COVID-19 may return to childcare with written permission of a health care provider or health jurisdiction.

## What should I do if my child has been exposed to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the childcare facility while the case was showing symptoms or in the 48 hours since symptoms began?

- Anyone who has had **close contact** with someone who is suspected or confirmed with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days, monitor for symptoms and call their health care provider if they become sick.