COVID-19 Disease

What is COVID-19 disease?

COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) is a disease caused by a virus named SARS-CoV-2. It can be very contagious and spread quickly. Over one million people have died from COVID-19 in the United States.

COVID-19 most often causes respiratory symptoms that can feel much like a cold, the flu, or pneumonia. COVID-19 may attack more than your lungs and respiratory system. Other parts of your body may also be affected by the disease. Most people with COVID-19 have mild symptoms, but some people become severely ill.

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 spreads when an infected person breathes out droplets and very small particles that contain the virus. Other people can breathe in these droplets and particles, or these droplets and particles can land on their eyes, nose, or mouth. In some circumstances, these droplets may contaminate surfaces they touch.

Anyone infected with COVID-19 can spread it, even if they do NOT have symptoms.

The risk of animals spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 to people is low. The virus can spread from people to animals during close contact. People with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should avoid contact with animals.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear two to fourteen days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. Possible symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.

What are the [new CDC guidelines](#) for COVID-19 and respiratory virus prevention?

- Stay [up to date with vaccination](#) to protect against serious illness, hospitalization, and death.
- Practice good hygiene by covering coughs and sneezes, washing, or sanitizing hands often, and cleaning frequently touched surfaces.
- Take steps for cleaner air, such as bringing in more fresh outside air, purifying indoor air, or gathering with others outdoors.

PEC APP 4/24

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If you get sick:

- Stay home. Isolate at home away from others until 24 hours after symptoms improve and fever subsides without the use of medication.
- Resume activities with precautions. After isolation, continue with enhanced prevention strategies for the next five days, such as wearing masks, maintaining distance, and improving hygiene and air quality.

How is COVID-19 treated?

Some people are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 or need hospital care. Antivirals can provide additional protection, even if you are vaccinated, if:

- You are at least 50 years of age, especially 65 and older, OR
- You have certain underlying medical conditions, such as a weakened immune system, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, or chronic lung disease, regardless of your age.

You should talk to a medical provider about getting treatment for COVID-19 if you fall into one of the two categories above.

There are treatment options for people at higher risk of severe disease. The antiviral your doctor prescribes depends on whether you're at home or in the hospital, and on which medications you are currently taking.

Free language assistance available upon request.