What is novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus strain spreading from person-to-person in China and other countries, including the United States. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

How does COVID-19 spread?

Health experts are still learning the details. Currently, it is thought to spread through:

- the air by coughing and sneezing
- by close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes
- in rare cases, contact with feces

How severe is COVID-19?

Experts are still learning about the range of illness from COVID-19. Reported cases have ranged from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires hospitalization. So far, deaths have been reported mainly in older adults who had other health conditions.

What are the symptoms?

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:
**Who is at risk for COVID-19?**

Currently the risk to the general public is considered low. To minimize the risk of spread, health officials are working with healthcare providers to promptly identify and evaluate any suspected cases.

Travelers to and from certain areas of the world may be at increased risk. Although coronavirus originated geographically in Wuhan, China, the disease is not specific to any ethnic group. **Chinese ancestry—or any other ancestry—does not make a person more vulnerable to this illness.**

**How can I prevent from getting COVID-19?**

If you are planning to travel, please follow the CDC’s guidance: [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel).

Right now, there are no additional precautions recommended for the general public. There are steps you can take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent coronavirus:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If hand washing facilities are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
- 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

Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent COVID-19 infections. Additionally, the CDC, U.S. Surgeon General and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommend that face masks are only worn by health workers and those caring for someone in close settings to help prevent the spread of disease to others. Face masks work by those that are well may cause a false sense of security.

**How is COVID-19 treated?**

There are no medications specifically approved for coronavirus. Most people with mild coronavirus illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. However, some cases develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.