COVID-19

Coronavirus

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What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a type of germ called a coronavirus.[1] COVID-19 causes sickness in the lungs and other parts of the body. The best way to prevent getting sick is to stay away from people sick with COVID-19 and to get the updated vaccine. The vaccines are safe and effective for preventing infection.

What are symptoms of COVID-19?

Some or all of the following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after contact with the virus:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Extreme tiredness
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell



How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is spread by tiny water droplets carrying the virus. People can become sick by:

- Breathing in the droplets. This can happen when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, breathes, or talks
- Touching your mouth, nose, or eyes after touching objects covered in the droplets.

COVID-19 can be spread even by people who do not feel sick or have symptoms.

How can I protect myself, my family, and my community?

The best way to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 is by getting a COVID-19 vaccine. It is also important to get a COVID-19 vaccine booster each year. If you didn't get a vaccine previously, getting an updated vaccine this year will still be effective.

The best way to protect your community, besides getting the vaccine, is by:

- Wearing a well-fitting mask that covers your nose and mouth
- Stay home if you are feeling sick
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Use hand sanitizer or
- Washing hands often with soap and water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands

What should I know about COVID vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective for children ages 6 months and older. The COVID-19 vaccine protects groups who may be at risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including:

- People ages 60 years and older
- People experiencing chronic health conditions
- People with weakened immune systems
- Pregnant people

References

1. CDC. About COVID-19. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published June 13, 2024. https://www.cdc.gov/covid/about/index.html
2. https://www.who.int/health-topics/ 1. Overview of covid-19 vaccines and vaccination. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. September 23, 2026.
3. Preventing spread of respiratory viruses when you're sick. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. August 18, 2025. https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/prevention/precautions-when-sick.html



What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

- Stay home if you are feeling sick
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Avoid close contact with people or animals
- Take a COVID test

If you test **positive** for COVID-19, take care of your symptoms. Stay home and away from others, or wear a well-fitting face mask. If you test **negative**, take care of your symptoms and consider taking a COVID test in 24 hours.

You can go back to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:

- Your symptoms are getting better overall
- You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

When you return to normal activities, continue to take precautions for the next 5 days, as you may still be able to spread the virus.

Urgently seek medical care if you have any of these emergency symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain or pressure
- Difficulty waking up or staying awake
- Blue colored lips or face
- Dehydration

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