

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

General Information about COVID-19

Questions Answers

1. **What is the novel coronavirus?** A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the [coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans](#) and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

2. **Why is the disease now being called COVID-19?** On February 11, 2020 the World Health Organization [announced](#) an official name for the disease that is causing the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak, first identified in Wuhan, China. The new name of this disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as "2019 novel coronavirus" or "2019-nCoV".

There are [many types](#) of human coronaviruses including some that commonly cause mild upper- respiratory tract illnesses. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans.

3. **How does COVID-19 spread?** COVID-19 is a new disease and **the CDC is still learning how it spreads**, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States. Currently, the virus is thought to spread mainly from person to person as follows:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.
- It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

4. **For what symptoms should I be monitoring?** COVID-19 presents with flu-like symptoms (fever, cough or sore throat, headache or body aches, and in some cases diarrhea and vomiting) or acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath).

5. **What is my risk of exposure?** At this time, most people remain at low risk of exposure. According to the United States Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration, at this time, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) emphasizes that, while the novel coronavirus, COVID-19 poses a potentially serious public health threat, the risk to individuals is dependent on exposure. For most people in the United States, the risk of infection with COVID-19 is currently low.

6. **Who is most at risk of having complications from COVID-19?** Elderly people with chronic conditions are currently the most at risk from complications from COVID-19. Given the vulnerable populations within the State's care, careful adherence to guidelines issued by Wisconsin Public Health, supervisors, and human resources is essential. Community members with flu-like symptoms need to stay home.

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7. What can I do to limit my risk and help prevent influenza and viruses like COVID-19? The CDC advises that the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19. There are simple everyday actions everyone can take to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

8. What can I do to best limit risk to my family?

More information is provided on the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) website.

9. What should I do if I'm experiencing flu-like symptoms?

Those who are sick are encouraged to stay home. According to the CDC, anyone having flu-like symptoms or Symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not go to work or to public buildings Until they are free of fever and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing or Other symptom-altering medications or cough suppressants). If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 And develop a fever and/or symptoms of respiratory illness, cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare Provider immediately BEFORE going to the clinic or emergency room.

10. Where can I learn more information? Additional up-to-date resources and information about COVID-19 can be found here:

- [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Wisconsin DHS COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [United States Department of State](#)

