



Updated April 1, 2020: Information is still evolving rapidly and BPHC will update this information as new and relevant information becomes available.

What is the 2019 novel coronavirus?

The 2019 novel coronavirus (SARS CoV-2, formerly known as 2019-nCoV) causes the disease now called COVID-19. Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses a few of which cause human infection and illness ranging from the common cold to more severe disease. Middle East Respiratory Syndrome virus (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome virus (SARS-CoV) are examples of coronaviruses that may cause severe disease.

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 spreads mainly from person to person. It is spread through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land on people who are nearby (within 6 feet). It may also be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a recently contaminated surface or object and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms include fever and respiratory illness, such as cough and difficulty breathing. In severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. Symptoms of COVID-19 may be similar to the flu, with muscle aches accompanying the respiratory tract symptoms.

Who is at risk for serious complications from COVID-19?

Some people are considered at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes:

- Older adults
- People with an underlying health condition including but not limited to heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, obesity

If you are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, you should:

- Isolate yourself from others as much as possible. Stay home.
- Stock up on supplies, including medications.
- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others.
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact (at least 6 feet) and wash your hands often.
- Avoid crowds.
- Avoid travel, especially cruise travel and non-essential air travel.

How can COVID-19 be prevented?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid exposure to the virus. BPHC always recommends standard precautions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Using alcohol-based hand rubs and gels.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick
- Staying home when you are sick.
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue or cough into your sleeve.

- Washing or sanitizing your hands before touching your face.
- Not sharing drinks, food, or eating utensils.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

If you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing and have higher risk of complications from COVID-19 you should:

- Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a health care provider's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Not travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Health care workers in contact with patients or other health care workers, and first responders (EMS, fire, police) need to be tested for COVID-19 whenever they have symptoms that could be due to COVID-19.

If you have mild symptoms and do not have a high-risk condition and are not a healthcare worker or first responder, you do not need to be evaluated in person or tested. You should isolate yourself from others as if you have COVID-19 by:

- Staying home except to get medical care.
- Not going to work, school, or public areas.
- Not using public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.
- If you are unavoidably around other people, wear a face mask, if possible.

Should I travel during this time?

COVID-19 is reported all over the world, including all states in the US. There are travel restrictions in effect in a large part of the world. Avoid travel. Postpone planned trips.

How is COVID-19 diagnosed?

If you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 virus and have been possibly exposed to COVID-19 in the past 14 days, your health care provider can test you for the virus. Health care providers should get a detailed contact and medical history from patients with fever and acute respiratory illness.

How is COVID-19 treated?

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19 infection. People infected with COVID-19 should receive supportive care and help to relieve symptoms. Most people with COVID-19 are not sick enough to require hospitalization and should be able to stay home. People who think they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their health care provider immediately.



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