

What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example health care workers and close contacts of people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include

- 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.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should seek medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.



2019 Coronavirus (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions*

*Information is current as of 2/14/2020 and is subject to change

Key Points

- This virus can spread from person-to-person. It can cause severe disease and death.
- Right now, this virus is not spreading in the community in the United States and most Americans are at low risk.
- The greatest risk for COVID-19 is travel to China and close contact with a confirmed case.
- Contact with individuals of Chinese/Asian descent and Chinese food/restaurants are not risk factors for COVID-19.

Background

What is 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- The 2019 Novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19, is a new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.
- Learn more about [2019 Novel Coronavirus](#).

What is a novel coronavirus?

- A novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new coronavirus not previously identified.
- COVID-19 is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

What is the source of COVID-19 (where did it come from)?

- Public health officials and partners are working to identify the source of the COVID-19.
- Early on, many of the patients in the COVID-19 outbreak had some link to a large seafood and live animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread.

How does the virus spread?

- Much is unknown about how COVID-19 spreads. Current knowledge is largely based on what is known about other coronaviruses.
- The virus probably originated from an animal source and is now capable of person-to-person spread. Person-to-person spread is thought to occur when an infected person coughs or sneezes within 6 feet of an uninfected person and the uninfected person breathes in the virus.
- It is currently unclear how easily this virus is spread between people.

Is COVID-19 the same as the MERS-CoV or SARS virus?

- No. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses and COVID-19 is not the same as the coronaviruses that cause Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) or Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).
- Initial analysis suggests this virus emerged from a virus related to SARS.

Prevention

How can I protect myself?

- The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. People should avoid travel to China and follow general respiratory prevention measures:
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important after using the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Cover your cough or sneeze into a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
 - Stay home when you are sick.

Should I wear a mask to protect myself from COVID-19? What about while flying?

- No, unless you are sick. U.S. CDC does not currently recommend the use of face masks for healthy individuals to prevent COVID-19.
- Surgical masks are meant to protect sick individuals from infecting others.

Medical Information & Testing

What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?

- Signs and symptoms include:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Difficulty Breathing/Shortness of Breath
- Signs and symptoms range from little to no symptoms to severe illness and even death.
- Symptoms are very similar to seasonal influenza, which is circulating in Maine.

I think I should be tested for COVID-19. How can I do that?

- If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, like cough and shortness of breath, within 14 days after travel from China, you should call your healthcare provider and Maine CDC. Mention your recent travel or if you had contact with a confirmed case.
- Your healthcare provider will work with Maine CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

How do healthcare facilities test people for COVID-19?

- Healthcare facilities should immediately call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821 if they identify someone they think meets the criteria.
- Maine CDC will work with the healthcare facility and U.S. CDC to coordinate testing for those deemed appropriate.

What are the guidelines for testing/Who should get tested?

- Healthcare facilities should immediately call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821 if they identify someone they think meets the criteria.
- Patients in the United States who meet the following criteria should be evaluated as a PUI for COVID-19:

Clinical Features	&	Epidemiologic Risk
Fever ¹ or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath)	AND	Any person, including health care workers, who has had close contact ² with a laboratory-confirmed ^{3,4} 2019-nCoV patient within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever ¹ and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath)	AND	A history of travel from Hubei Province, China ³ within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever ¹ and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) requiring hospitalization ⁴	AND	A history of travel from mainland China ⁵ within 14 days of symptom onset

Public Health Response and Current Situation

Am I at risk for COVID-19 infection in the United States?

- The immediate health risk for COVID-19 in the United States is low.
- If you did not travel to China and did not have close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, then your risk is low.
- The situation is rapidly evolving. For the most up-to-date travel information, visit [U.S. CDC's travel health notices page](#).

Am I at risk for COVID-19 from a package or products shipping from China?

- Currently there is no evidence to support the spread of COVID-19 with imported goods. There are no cases of COVID-19 associated with imported goods.

Which states have confirmed cases of COVID-19?

- U.S. CDC has a [map of states with confirmed COVID-19 cases](#). This map is updated regularly.

Which countries have confirmed cases?

- U.S. CDC has a [world map and list of countries with confirmed cases](#). This map is updated regularly.

Travel

Is it safe to travel to China and other countries where there are cases of COVID-19?

- [U.S. CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to China](#) (this does not include the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau, or the island of Taiwan).
- For travel to countries other than China, travelers should follow [general respiratory prevention measures](#) and visit [U.S. CDC's travelers health page](#).
- The situation is rapidly evolving. For the most up-to-date travel information, visit [U.S. CDC's travel health notices page](#).

Is it safe to travel to areas in the United States that have cases of COVID-19?

- Yes, at this time there are no travel restrictions within the United States due to COVID-19.
- Most people are unlikely to be exposed to this virus, so the immediate health risk for COVID-19 is low.
- The situation is rapidly evolving. For the most up-to-date travel information, visit [U.S. CDC's travel health notices page](#).

I recently **traveled to China** and am now sick. What should I do?

- If you were in China and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, within 14 days after you left, you should:
 - Call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.
 - Call a healthcare provider. Tell them of your recent travel and symptoms BEFORE showing up to the office.
 - Avoid contact with others.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.

- Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid non-essential travel while sick.

I recently traveled to an area other than China and am now sick. What should I do?

- Contact a healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider may test you for influenza or other respiratory illnesses.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid non-essential travel while sick.

I have a connection at an airport in China. Is that okay?

- A flight connection at an airport in China is okay if you do not plan to leave the airport.
- In general, the travel restrictions do not apply to travelers who only transit through an airport.

My child's school has international students or students traveling back from China. Should I be concerned? What about students traveling back from countries other than China?

- International students and other students traveling from countries other than China do not pose a risk of COVID-19.
- Students traveling back from China should stay home for 14 days after leaving China. Students should see a healthcare provider if symptoms develop.
- Students traveling back from China with respiratory symptoms should contact their healthcare provider right away.
- Always practice general respiratory prevention measures.

I have friends/family/coworkers traveling China that I am going to be exposed to. Am I at risk for coronavirus?

- If your friend/family member/coworker is returning from China, they should stay home for 14 days after leaving China and avoid contact with others.
- Always practice general respiratory prevention measures. Anyone with respiratory symptoms should contact a healthcare provider.

I have friends/family/coworkers traveling from countries other than China that I am going to be exposed to. Am I at risk for coronavirus?

- If your friend/family member/coworker is returning from a country other than China, you are not at increased risk of COVID-19.
- Always practice general respiratory prevention measures. Anyone with respiratory symptoms should contact a healthcare provider.

I am picking someone up from an airport that is coming back from China. What do I need to do?

- Always practice general respiratory prevention measures.
- If the individual is symptomatic, they should be masked and taken to a healthcare provider right away. Make sure to call the healthcare provider's office before you get there.