

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is COVID-19 or the Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illness in animals or humans. COVID-19 is a new or novel type of coronavirus that causes infectious disease in humans.



2. How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets, for example, land on surfaces, and hands touch the surfaces, and then hands touch the face; or droplets land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby; or droplets are inhaled into the lungs from the cough or sneeze of an infected person.

In addition, scientists now believe that [COVID-19 can spread by talking or breathing via aerosols](#). Aerosols are infectious viral particles that can float or drift around in the air for up to three hours. A person can

breathe in the aerosol and become infected.

3. How long does the virus live on surfaces?

COVID-19 coronavirus can survive up to four hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard, and up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel. As mentioned above, researchers also found that this virus can linger in an aerosol form for up to three hours.



4. **What is the incubation period for COVID-19?** The incubation period for COVID-19 range from 1-14 days, most commonly around five days. During the incubation period, an infected person is not experiencing symptoms, not even an elevated temperature. This is why social distancing, staying at home, hand washing, cleaning high touch surfaces, and wearing a face covering while in public is so important to reduce the spread of the virus.
5. **Can the virus spread during the incubation period?** Yes, scientific research has found that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms. This is why social distancing as a measure to reduce the spread is so important.
6. **What are the symptoms?** [Here](#) is information from the CDC on COVID-19 symptoms when compared to other respiratory conditions. And here is an [CDC infographic](#) displaying the information.
7. **Who is at risk for COVID-19?** Anyone can be at risk for contracting the COVID-19, and anyone can get sick from it. Most people who display symptoms of the infection recover. However, older persons and persons

with pre-existing medical conditions appear to develop serious illness more often than others. Also, a disproportionate burden of illness and death from COVID-19 is higher among racial and ethnic minority groups. Recently and unexpectedly, COVID-19 has infected [young people](#) and [children](#), which can result in serious health outcomes.

8. Is there a cure for COVID-19? No. Scientists and the medical community have not identified any medication or treatment to cure or lessen the duration of the infection. Also, there is no vaccine for COVID-19. However, there are efforts in the medical community to test existing medications to treat patients who are ill. Also, scientists are working to find new effective treatments for people suffering with COVID-19 illness. Scientist are also working to develop a vaccine for prevention, but this will take a while.

9. What should I do if I feel sick?

- Stay at home and get medical guidance
- Separate yourself from others and animals in your home
- Call ahead before visiting doctor
- Wear a face mask or cloth face covering
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Avoid sharing personal household items
- Clean your hands often, especially with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Clean all high-touch surfaces daily
- Monitor your symptoms and report worsening symptoms to your healthcare provider
- Discontinuing home isolation should be done in consultation with your healthcare provider

10. What else can I do to promote self-care if I am sick and quarantined at home?



Being sick with a viral infection is not easy and neither is being quarantined. Nevertheless, it is important to take care of



yourself to support the recuperation process. Here are 6 suggestions to promote self-care and feeling better:

- a. **Hydrate** – It is important to stay hydrated when you are fighting a viral infection. Drink plenty of water. Water is the best source of hydration and it helps replenish body fluids and electrolytes loss during fever and any GI symptoms. Drinking orange juice or electrolyte drinks (i.e., Pedialyte or Core) is also helpful to restore balance to the body. Here’s a [video](#) with more information about the importance of hydration for recovery after a viral infection.



- b. **Eat** – Loss of appetite is common when we are sick, yet eating is important for healing. Starting with small portions of light food (i.e., chicken broth, gelatin, apple juice, crackers), and slowly advance to heartier meals is best. When you’re hungry and your stomach is ready, homemade chicken soup is a tried and true feel better food. In fact, research has found that chicken soup can significantly inhibit neutrophil migration (the body’s inflammatory response to a viral infection) and could be the mechanism by which the soup lessens symptomatic upper respiratory tract infections and associated symptoms.¹ Overall, eat to restore strength and getting back to feeling well again. Information, tips, videos tips and tools for on maintaining food safety at home can be found on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ [Eat Right](#) portal.

- c. **Rest/Relax** – Drink hot flavored herbal tea. Read a book. Watch a good movie. Laugh hard and often. Color or paint. Do yoga or just stretch. Remember that rest helps the body heal, so get 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night.
- d. **Reduce Fever & Aches** – If you have a fever take fever reducers like Tylenol and Ibuprophen as directed and hydrate. Eat cold things like ice chips, iced tea, lemonade, cold ginger ale, gelato, and popsicles, as tolerated. Cold compresses applied to the forehead or feet help cool the body. Tylenol and Ibuprophen will also reduce any physical aches and pains experienced while you are recuperating when taken as directed.

¹ Rennard, Barbara O. et al., Chicken Soup Inhibits Neutrophil Chemotaxis *In Vitro* CHEST, (2011). Volume 118, Issue 4, 1150 – 1157. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11035691> (Accessed April 6, 2020).

- e. **Maintaining Personal Hygiene** – Hand washing to reduce the spread of COVID-19 is very important and the consistent message since the start of the pandemic. Oral care is also important, including replacing your toothbrush every 3 months and always replace it at the beginning and end of an upper respiratory infection. But did you know that recuperation from a viral infection is enhanced with daily hot showers (or bathing)? Well, there are [25 benefits](#) (and a few cautions) for keeping up

with caring for the largest organ of our body (your skin) when at home in quarantine or recuperating. Make sure to moisturize your skin, too!



- f. **Remain Connected**– Listen to or play music; talk, read, text or video chat family, friends and co-workers; laugh again; or learn something new on [Coursera](#), [Udemy](#), expand your culinary skills via online instruction, or social media.

11. What can be done to decrease the spread of COVID-19? What else should I know?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the restroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available for hand washing, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Maintain social distancing between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). Social distancing, while critical during this pandemic, is not always easy. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration or SAMHSA has developed [Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During an Infectious Disease Outbreak](#), which may be helpful.
- The White House issued [guidance](#) to help slow the spread of the COVID-19.
- CDC recommends that the general public wear cloth face coverings to help reduce virus transmission in public spaces. Wearing a face covering also reduces face touching.
- N95 facemasks are a critical component of personal protective equipment or PPE for health professional, first responders, and other frontline workers.



The CDC does not recommend the use of N95 masks for the general public due to the shortage of these masks.

- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects people frequently touch.
- Stay home when you are sick.

12. What can I do clean and disinfect my home if someone is sick?

If someone is sick at home, it's important to take extra care to clean and disinfect to avoid spreading the virus to other household members. Here is a [guide](#) from the CDC on this topic. As a resource, the American Chemistry Council has created a list of [COVID-19 fighting cleaning products](#). This list has been approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for use during the COVID-19 pandemic.

13. What to Do if My Pet Tests Positive for the Virus that Causes COVID-19? CDC updated information on actions to take if your [pet tests positive](#) for the virus that causes COVID-19.

14. How long will my community have to stay at home or shelter in place? Staying at home and sheltering in



place are measures that the public health and scientific communities promote to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. In addition, the CDC website provides the following information: “CDC makes recommendations, shares information, and provides guidance to help slow down the spread of COVID-19 in the U.S. including guidance for schools and businesses. CDC regularly shares information and provides assistance to state, local, territorial, and tribal health authorities. These local authorities are responsible for making decisions including stay at home or shelter in place.” However, [updated guidelines](#) for state and local authorities’ reference for phasing in the restart of their economy

and communities were published by the federal government.

15. Although there is no cure, vaccine, or safe and effective treatment for COVID-19, what’s the story with anti-body testing and blood plasma donations? According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), antibody tests – also known as serological tests – can help identify people who have been infected and developed antibodies. These antibodies may protect them from future infection and potentially identify those still at risk. Review this [FDA Update](#) for more information on serology testing efforts. The FDA is also seeking convalescent plasma which is an antibody-rich product made from blood donated by people who have recovered from COVID-19. People who have fully recovered from the disease for at least two weeks can



contact their local blood or plasma collection center today to schedule an appointment. Visit the FDA's newly [launched webpage](#) and the [American Red Cross](#) to learn more.

16. Is there guidance from the CDC on how to keep healthy during the flu season while we are in the COVID-19 pandemic? It is very important that the local plans be put in place to appropriately address the seasonal flu in order to reduce the compounding effects of the seasonal flu and COVID-19. The [CDC provides guidance](#) on the importance of seasonal and other important vaccinations during the pandemic.

17. Is there information and guidance on opening schools that would be helpful to parents and clients? There is some much debate and competing information on this topic. Nonetheless, here are two resources from the CDC for parents to reference when it comes to preparing children for the upcoming school year:

- [A Back to School Planning Checklist for Parents, Guardians and Caregivers](#)
- [A School Decision Making Tool for Parents, Guardians and Caregivers](#)

18. Where can I get more information about COVID-19? The CDC maintains a [COVID-19 website](#) with user friendly information for a variety of audiences and it is updated regularly. For example, CDC provides information and resources on [COVID-19 and where you live, work, learn and play](#). Additionally, the CDC's [Cases in U.S.](#) webpage includes the most up to date information reported by states and includes what is known about the demographic characteristics of COVID-19 cases in the country.

19. Please see additional information on COVID-19 [social media tools](#), [a health campaign for Black Americans](#), and clinical studies as well as information related to the upcoming flu season and vaccinations below:

- [Social Media Toolkit](#) For updated graphics and messages related to COVID-19 to share with your community.
- [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID Clinical Studies \(Spanish\)](#) As of last week, more than 339,000 individuals have completed the survey for the COVID Prevention Network Volunteer Screening Registry. Individuals interested in volunteering for a COVID19 Clinical Study can register [here](#).
- ["You Will See Me" Campaign Emphasizes Mask Wearing Helps Black Americans Prevent COVID-19 Spread](#) Research shows that COVID-19 affects Black Americans at higher rates than most other groups because of systemic healthcare, economic, and social inequalities. With [mask wearing being one of the most important ways to combat COVID-19](#), the CDC Foundation with HHS and the Ad Council launched the star-studded ["You Will See Me"](#) campaign encouraging Black Americans to wear face masks.



- [Addressing Influenza Vaccination Disparities During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) In this *Journal of American Medical Association* (JAMA) article, CDC scientists discuss the public health urgency of increasing flu vaccination uptake early in the 2020-2021 season to diminish the threat to patients and hospitals of overlapping outbreaks.
- [The Difference between Flu and COVID-19](#) Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. Read in [Spanish](#).

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