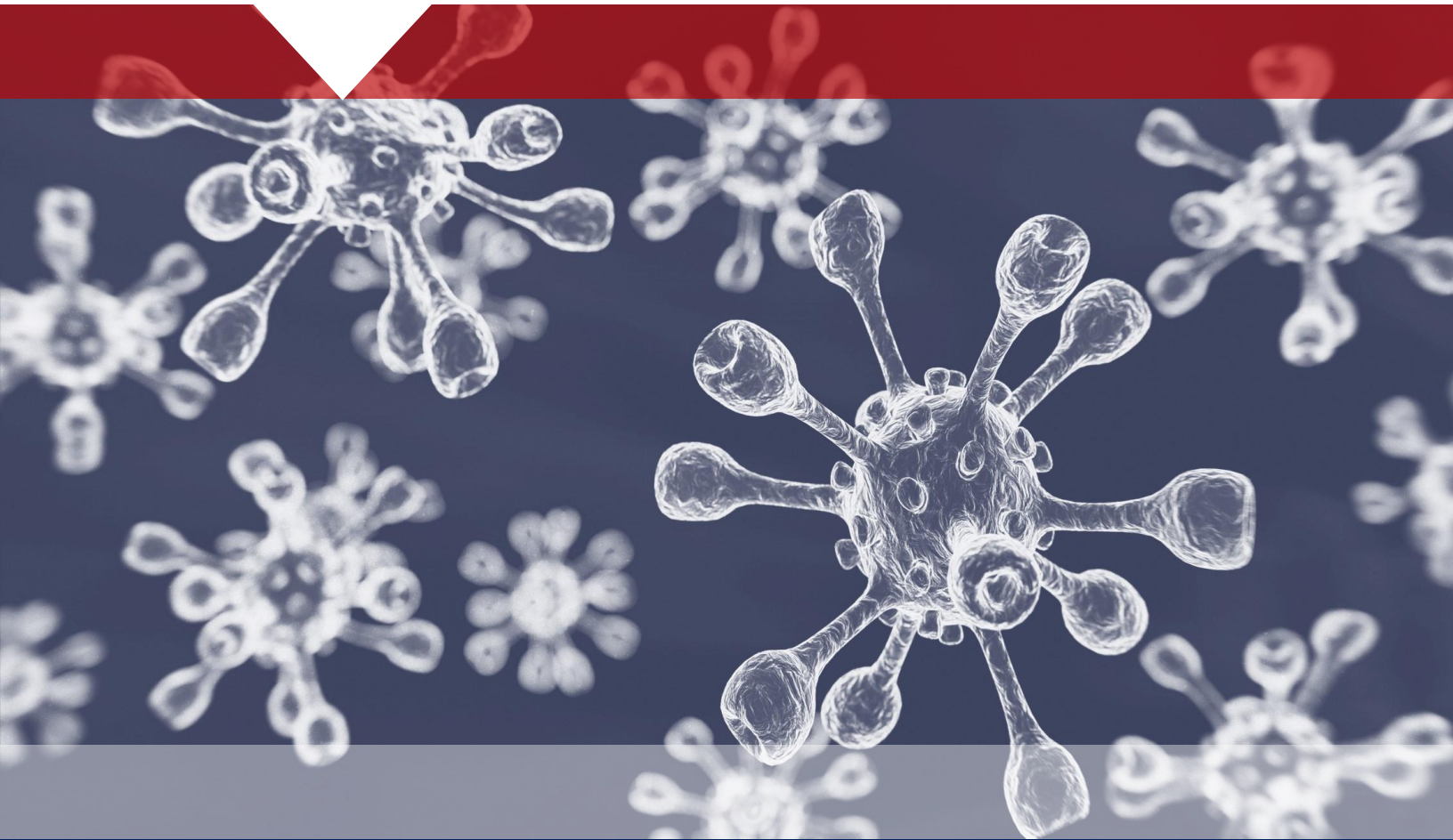




**A GUIDE FOR  
CAREGIVERS  
UNDERSTANDING  
CORONAVIRUS**



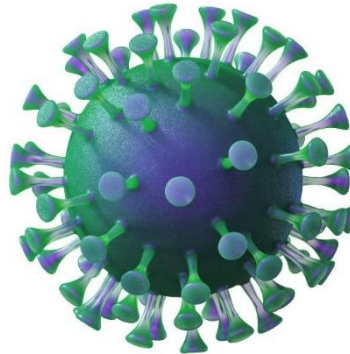
**WELLBEYOND CARE**

**March 20, 2020**

# WHAT EXACTLY ARE CORONAVIRUSES?

**Coronaviruses** are a family of viruses that can infect both humans and animals. The first human coronavirus popped up in the mid-1960s. To date, there are seven (7) coronaviruses that can infect people.

The newest (2019) coronavirus (**aka COVID-19**) was first detected in China in late December, 2019.



**You may also hear the virus referred to as “Novel Coronavirus” because:**

- NOVEL = NEW (never seen before).
- CORONA = CROWN (named for the crown-like spikes on the virus).

**Other coronaviruses you may have heard of include:**

- SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), and
- MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)

**Where did COVID-19 come from?**

Experts believe the newest coronavirus probably originated in an animal in China. Both MERS and SARs originated in bats. Many of the first people to become sick from COVID-19 in China either worked or shopped at a live-animal market. So, while the exact source is still unknown, researchers are fairly certain the virus was spread from animals to humans. The virus was then able to transmit from person to person, without animal contact.

**Who is at risk for infection?**

While anyone of any age, race, or gender can become infected by COVID-19, the average age of people with confirmed cases is 56 years old.

Older adults who have other medical conditions, such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease are at higher risk of serious illness from an infection with COVID-19.



## The Facts!

- The number of active COVID-19 cases grows each day, and it's likely going to get worse before it gets better.
- One reason for the increase in cases being diagnosed is the increase in testing. Before the test was widely available, it's likely people had the infection without even knowing it.
- There is currently no vaccine or cure for COVID-19, but researchers are working hard to make these available ASAP.
- About 81% of people who become infected will have a mild case and fully recover without complications.



## Should you wear a mask?

### You **SHOULD** wear a mask if . . .

- You are a healthcare worker caring for someone with symptoms of COVID-19.
- You have symptoms of COVID-19.

### You **SHOULD NOT** wear a mask to . . .

- Protect yourself from COVID-19 in public places.

***The general public is not advised to use face masks for protection against coronavirus.***

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

COVID-19 causes a range of symptoms in those infected. The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure:

SEVERITY	SIGNS & SYMPTOMS
Asymptomatic	No symptoms at all.
Mild	Mild cold-like symptoms, such as stuffy or runny nose, cough, sore throat, or achiness. Some people have also reported mild diarrhea.
Severe	Fever, cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties; may progress to pneumonia.
Critical	Respiratory failure, septic shock, multiple organ dysfunction or failure, and even death.

### What should you do if your client shows symptoms?

Contact a doctor right away if you notice any of the symptoms listed above, especially if your client has recently travelled or has been in contact with someone who is known to have the virus.

### What should you do if YOU show symptoms?

- Caregivers who have signs and symptoms of any respiratory infection should not report to work.

### If you develop signs and symptoms while on-the-job:

- Immediately stop work, put on a facemask, and self-isolate at home;
- Inform your supervisor of all individuals, equipment, and locations you came in contact with; and
- Contact and follow your local health department recommendations for next steps.

## HOW TO PREVENT SPREADING THE VIRUS

There are two ways to prevent the spread of infection:

- Prevent *yourself* from getting sick, and
- Prevent *others* from catching the virus from you.

### To prevent yourself from getting sick:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water (preferred), or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth if your hands aren't clean.
- Avoid close contact (within 6 ft) with anyone who is sick.
- Avoid crowded places such as sporting events, concerts, or religious gatherings.
- To keep your immune system strong, get enough rest, eat a balanced diet, and perform some type of exercise each day.

### To prevent others from catching the virus from you.

- Stay home from work, school, and public areas if you're sick, except for medical visits.
- If you must leave the house for a medical visit, call the doctor in advance and wear a face mask to protect others with whom you may come in contact.
- Separate yourself from other people and animals in the home as much as possible. In other words, try to stay in a separate room with the door closed.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Or use a clean tissue, then throw it away and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces you touch frequently.
- Avoid sharing dishes, glasses, bedding, and other household items if you're sick.



## HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

***There are two ways COVID-19 is spread:***

- **Person-to-person:** The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person between people who are in close contact with one another. Droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes can travel **up to 6 feet away**. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses (or become inhaled into the lungs) of people who are nearby.
- **Contact with infected surfaces:** Droplets from an infected person can also land on surfaces or objects. When an uninfected person touches the surface or object that has the virus on it, then touches their own mouth, nose, or eyes, the virus enters the uninfected person.

**A study published February 6, 2020 in [The Journal of Hospital Infection](#) found that coronaviruses can stay on surfaces such as metal, glass or plastic for as long as nine days.**



## HOW TO DISINFECT SURFACES

In homes, the CDC recommends, "routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks)."

### Other recommendations from the CDC include:

- Wear disposable gloves while cleaning and discard after each use.
- Prepare a bleach solution to use on hard surfaces by mixing 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water.

### To clean towels, linens, and other laundry:

- Use gloves.
- Do not shake linens.
- Wash at the highest temperature possible.
- Dry completely.

## HOW IS COVID-19 TREATED?

*There is currently no specific treatment for COVID-19 infection. Supportive measures are recommended depending on the type and severity of the symptoms. Guidelines are as follows:*

SEVERITY	SUPPORTIVE MEASURES
<b>Asymptomatic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact a doctor (and follow the doctor's orders).</li> <li>• Follow isolation precautions.</li> <li>• Monitor for symptoms.</li> </ul>
<b>Mild</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact a doctor (and follow the doctor's orders).</li> <li>• Follow isolation precautions.</li> <li>• Monitor for worsening symptoms. The CDC reports, "some observations suggest that <b><i>respiratory symptoms may worsen in the second week of illness.</i></b>"</li> <li>• Get plenty of rest and fluids.</li> <li>• Tylenol or Motrin can ease discomfort associated with mild, cold-like symptoms.</li> </ul>
<b>Severe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get emergency help for difficulty breathing.</li> <li>• Hospitalization is likely required.</li> <li>• Follow isolation precautions.</li> </ul>
<b>Critical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life-saving measures are required at this stage.</li> <li>• Isolation precautions remain.</li> </ul>

## MANAGING ANXIETY AND FEAR OVER COVID-19

The COVID-19 scare has many people on edge. And all of its effects on society, such as schools closing, the stock market crash, and declared states of emergency can cause extreme anxiety.

Non-stop coverage in the media, misinformation on social media, and the general uncertainty of where all this is going can make matters worse.

- **Experts advise that anxiety is a normal, protective human response.** It's when your brain scans your body and the environment for potential threats so that you can get prepared to react, if necessary.

The problem is that stress and anxiety can easily spiral into panic. Panic is NOT productive.

- ***For people who already suffer from anxiety, the loudest message coming through is that everyone is powerless to an invisible threat that has the potential to devastate individuals, families, and even entire communities.*** This fear can lead to irrational behaviors such as fixating on handwashing or wearing a mask when it's not necessary to do so.
- ***On the other side of the spectrum, there are those who refuse to see the virus as a threat at all.*** They may block it out completely, downplay the risk, and even ignore basic advice to wash hands and avoid public gatherings.
- **Both of these are stress-related responses. And neither is productive.** Problems can arise when stress spirals out of control and leaves a person to obsess over protective measures—or ignore them altogether.

**The healthiest response lies somewhere in the middle of these two extremes!**



If you, or someone you know seems to suffer from one of these stress responses, here are five easy steps that can help keep stress and anxiety at a healthy level:

1. **Try to stay “in the moment.”** Anxiety can spiral out of control when your mind begins to predict catastrophic future events. Just know that all you can do is take measure to protect yourself from what is happening right now. You can't predict the future.
2. **Stay informed but know when to turn off the news (and log out of social media).** It's important to stay up-to-date and know the facts. You should tune in for that. But there's a point at which news and social media stop being helpful. You could spend hours listening to headlines or scrolling tweets for alerts, but none of that makes you any safer.
3. **Get prepared.** Don't feel silly, weak, or embarrassed to follow reasonable safety advice from trusted sources. In fact, feeling prepared can give you a sense of control, which can also decrease anxiety.
4. **Practice self-care.** Get a good night's sleep. Eat a balanced diet. And get a little bit of exercise each day. These things help boost your immune system and can help decrease anxiety as well.
5. **Reach out for help if you need it.** There is no shame in reaching out to a friend, family member, your doctor, or even a mental health expert if you feel your anxiety spiraling out of control. **Help is available. You are not alone.**

## FINAL THOUGHTS: KNOW THE MYTHS & FACTS SURROUNDING COVID-19

**MYTH:** You should stay away from people of Asian descent because they are more likely to have the virus.

- FACT:** Anyone, no matter their ethnicity, can become infected by COVID-19.

**MYTH:** Products shipped from China may contain the virus.

- FACT:** It's not likely that the virus could survive that long on a package, especially after it goes through the extreme temperature changes that occur during an international flight.

**MYTH:** A face mask will protect you from COVID-19.

- FACT:** Professional, tight-fitting respirators (such as the N95 mask) can protect health care workers as they care for infected patients. In the general public, a lightweight disposable surgical mask will not protect you from the virus. They don't fit tightly and may allow tiny infected droplets to get into the nose, mouth or eyes.

**MYTH:** A coronavirus test costs \$3,000 in the United States.

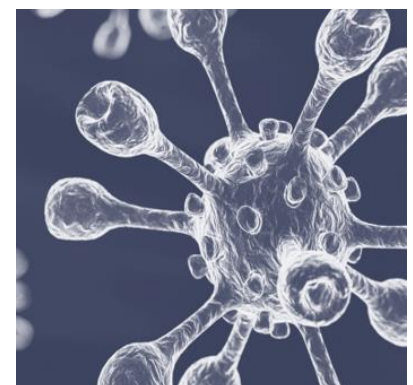
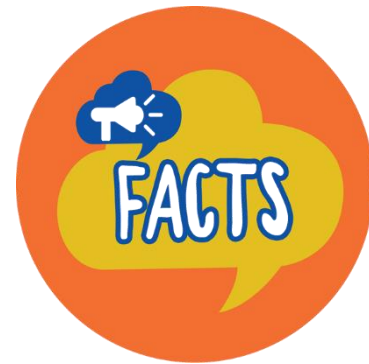
- FACT:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has authorized the use of two tests – one from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and one from the New York State Department of Public Health – and neither agency charges patients for the test.

**MYTH:** Spraying alcohol or chlorine on your body can kill the new coronavirus.

- FACT:** Spraying alcohol or chlorine on your body cannot kill viruses that have entered your body. These chemicals can also be harmful to clothes, skin, or mucous membranes such as eyes or mouth.

**MYTH:** Vaccines against the flu and pneumonia can protect you against the new coronavirus.

- FACT:** Neither the yearly vaccine against the flu nor the pneumococcal vaccine against pneumonia provide protection against the new coronavirus.



# COVID-19 DAILY CAREGIVER SCREENING

Each day, as a caregiver you should ask yourself these questions:

Are you experiencing a cough, sore throat, fever, or shortness of breath?

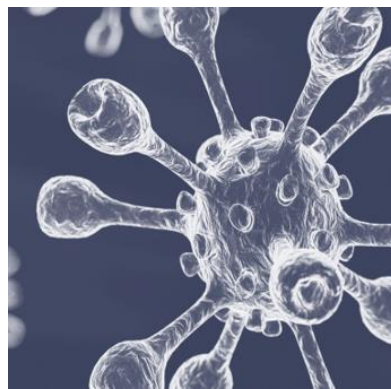
Are you returning from any foreign trips with level 2 or 3 travel designations?

Have you been in contact with anyone diagnosed, or under investigation of contracting COVID-19?



If the caregiver responds "No" to all questions, no further action is required.

If the caregiver responds "Yes" to any questions, you may be at risk of carrying COVID-19 and need to follow the appropriate next steps as directed by the DOH, CDC and WHO.



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