



## COVID-19 WHITE PAPER

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[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

### **COVID- 19 BASICS**

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. 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.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading very easily and sustainably between people. Information from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic suggests that this virus is spreading more efficiently than influenza, but not as efficiently as measles, which is highly contagious. In general, the more closely a person interacts with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. Some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. 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. This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food.

## **SYMPTOMS**

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar in children and adults. COVID-19 can look different in different people. For many people, being sick with COVID-19 would be a little bit like having the flu. People can get a fever, cough, or have a hard time taking deep breaths. Most people who have gotten COVID-19 have not gotten very sick. Only a small group of people who get it have had more serious problems.

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

## **WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO TO REDUCE RISK**

Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs. Remind children to wash their hands frequently and stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing or sick. Also, remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash. The steps listed below will help to reduce risks of contracting COVID – 19 at home and introducing into the school environment.

### **I. Know how it spreads.**

- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
  - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
  - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.

- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

## II. Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others.

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Everyone should wear a cloth face cover in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
  - Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.

## III. Cover coughs and sneezes.

- **Always cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

## IV. Avoid close contact.

- **Inside your home:** Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- **Outside your home:** Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household.
  - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
  - Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
  - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

## V. Clean and disinfect.

- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.** This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them.** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- **Then, use a household disinfectant.** Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work.

Checklist for parents:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/schools-checklist-parents.pdf>

All above information derived from the Center for Disease Control.