

What you need to know about the Coronavirus.

What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses named after their appearance, a crown, said Dr. Mark Rupp, an infectious disease expert at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

How dangerous is coronavirus?

Most coronaviruses cause mild symptoms that patients easily recover from.

What is COVID-19 and how is it different from other coronaviruses?

COVID-19 is not the same as other coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold. Some cause illness in people, and others, such as canine and feline coronaviruses, only infect animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses that infect animals have emerged to infect people and can spread between people, which is suspected to have occurred for the virus that causes COVID-19.

MERS and SARS are two other examples of coronaviruses that originated from animals and then spread to people.

What are the symptoms?

There is so much overlap in symptoms between flu and COVID-19 but a couple of hallmark differences do exist. Influenza tends to cause much more body pain and the COVID-19 virus tends to feel much more like the common cold with fever, cough, runny nose and diarrhea. However, in a small portion of the population with either COVID-19 or influenza, symptoms progress to kidney failure and respiratory failure.

When did the outbreak start?

The World Health Organization's China office says it began receiving reports in late December of a mysterious virus behind a number of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, a city in eastern China with a population of roughly 11 million people.

How is coronavirus transmitted?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), coronaviruses are common in camels, cattle, cats and bats. Person-to-person transmissions are thought to occur when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread.

How often are people hospitalized for it?

The risk of contracting coronavirus remains low for most Americans, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams said.

How can you protect against getting it?

The CDC recommends:

- Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with dirty hands
- Avoid close contact with sick people

If you are sick, you can protect others by:

- Staying home until you are well
- Avoiding close contact with others
- Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing
- Keep objects and surfaces in your home or workspace clean and disinfected

How do I sanitize surfaces?

Keeping your home and surfaces clean using the correct disinfectants is crucial in preventing its spread.

How long can it survive on surfaces?

The novel coronavirus may be able to live on surfaces, namely metal, glass or plastic, for up to nine days — if it resembles some of its other human coronavirus-causing “cousins,” that is.

Are you washing your hands correctly?

There are a few general rules to follow when it comes to washing your hands thoroughly, including for how long you should keep them under running water.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing

How do I make my own hand sanitizer?

If soap and water aren't available, hand sanitizer is the next best option — namely if it contains at least 60 percent alcohol, the CDC says.

Do face masks help?

“Surgical masks will not prevent your acquiring diseases,” said Dr. William Schaffner, a professor of preventive medicine and infectious diseases at Vanderbilt University, and the medical director of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases.

Who is most at risk?

Young people, senior citizens and those with immune deficiencies could have an acute reaction if exposed to the virus.

How do you care for a relative who has it?

Even if the patient does test positive, it can be considered safe to continue supporting them with some extra precautions.

Is there a cure?

Health agencies recommend patients receive supportive care to relieve coronavirus symptoms.

What happens after you recover from it?

A negative test doesn't always mean the patient is free of the virus

Can you get it through packages?

Surgeon General Jerome Adams said, “There is no evidence right now that the coronavirus can be spread through mail.”

How do you travel during the outbreak?

As the coronavirus risk grows globally, being smart about planning travel will help you stay safe.

Tips on how to talk to your kids about coronavirus

It's important to remember that children take cues from the adults that surround them, so how you address the virus at home may reflect in their behavior.

It's important for parents to get ahead of the rumors and to advise kids and teens to practice good hygiene and healthy practices, including thoroughly and frequently washing hands, avoiding touching one's eyes, nose and mouth, getting a good night's sleep, and eating healthy.”

Is coronavirus here to stay?

Dr. Robert Redfield, the director of the CDC, said the virus “is probably with us beyond this season, beyond this year.”