

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): What You Need to Know

What is Coronavirus?

- Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause mild illnesses like a cold, to more serious illnesses like pneumonia.
- A novel (new) coronavirus is a type of coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans.
- 2019 novel coronavirus is a new type of coronavirus identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness (which affects breathing) called COVID-19.
- COVID-19 infections have now been reported in many countries including the United States. For an updated list of affected areas, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

What are the Symptoms of Coronavirus?

- Commonly reported symptoms include fever, cough or shortness of breath.
- Most people with COVID-19 will have mild symptoms. People who are at most risk for severe illness are those who have other health conditions, including chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or a weakened immune system.

How Does Coronavirus Spread?

- The virus is likely to be spread 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 or sneezes.

Who is Most at Risk for Coronavirus?

- People who are at most risk for severe illness are elderly or have other health conditions such as chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes or a weakened immune system.

How Can I Protect Myself and Others from Coronavirus?

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when sneezing or coughing. Do not use your hands.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do not shake hands. Instead wave or elbow bump.
- Monitor your health more closely than usual for cold or flu symptoms.
- Get the flu shot. Although the flu shot will not protect you from COVID-19, it will help prevent the flu which has similar symptoms to this coronavirus.

What Should I do if I Feel Sick?

- Stay home and call your doctor if you have cold or flu symptoms like coughing, shortness of breath, fever or sore throat.
- If you do not feel better in 24-48 hours, seek care from your doctor.
- Avoid going out in public. Do not go to school or to work until you have been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of fever reducing drugs like Tylenol or ibuprofen.



- If you need help getting medical care, call 311.
- NYC will provide care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.
- Hospital staff will not ask about immigration status. Receiving health care is not a public benefit identified by the public charge test.

Is it Safe to Attend Large Gatherings?

- If you are sick, stay home.
- If you have chronic lung disease, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, or a weakened immune system, avoid unnecessary events and gatherings.
- If you have no symptoms, it is okay to go to events, but practice good hygiene and remain vigilant about your health.
- Right now, no large events or public gatherings are cancelled but we are monitoring developments and will adjust as needed.

What Else Can I Do?

- Help reduce overcrowding.
- Consider telecommuting where possible. Private-sector employers should consider allowing employees to telecommute if the job allows.
- The City is also asking private-sector employers to consider staggered work hours. For example, instead of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., consider changing some work hours to 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. or 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Walk or bike to work, if you can.
- When taking the subway, if the train is too packed, be patient and wait for the next one.
- If you have family or friends who have a chronic health condition, do not visit them if you feel sick.

What Should I Do about Harassment or Discrimination Related to Coronavirus?

- It is important to separate facts from fear and guard against stigma. A lot of information circulating about coronavirus on social media and in some news reporting is not based in the facts.
- Support your friends, neighbors and colleagues by sharing this fact sheet to counter misinformation. Obtain information from trusted sources like the NYC Health Department.
- If you are being harassed due to your race, nation of origin or other identities, call 311 to report discrimination or harassment to the NYC Commission on Human Rights.
- If you are experiencing stress or feeling anxious, contact NYC Well at 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355) or text "WELL" to 65173. NYC Well is a confidential help line that is staffed 24/7 by trained counselors who can provide brief supportive therapy, crisis counseling, and connections to behavioral health treatment, in more than 200 languages.

Where Can I Get More Information?

- For real-time updates, text COVID to 692-692. Messages and data rates may apply. Check your wireless provider plan for details.
- Visit [nyc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/coronavirus) for additional resources and information.