

What you should know about the 2019 novel

Coronavirus Disease

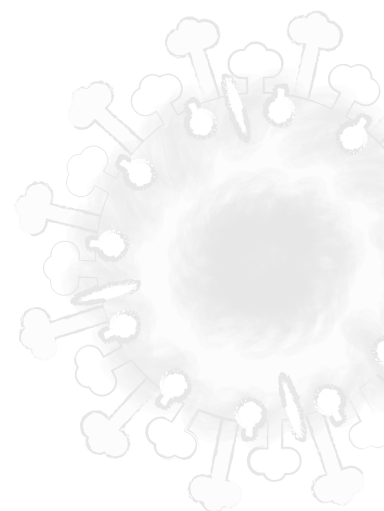


What is the 2019 Novel Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can cause illness in humans. The current outbreak is caused by a new (or 'novel') strain of coronavirus, similar to the viruses that caused the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak from 2001 to 2003 and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreaks from 2012 to the present time.

The virus has been named "2019-nCoV"

- 2019 refers to the year in which the first case occurred
- 'n' refers to 'novel'
- 'CoV' refers to coronavirus



What is the source of the 2019 novel coronavirus?

The source of 2019 Novel Coronavirus is not yet known. Scientists think the virus began in animals. At some point, one or more humans acquired infection from an animal, and those infected humans began transmitting infection to other humans.

What are the symptoms of the 2019 novel coronavirus disease?

We are still learning about the characteristics of 2019-nCoV. After being infected, a person may not have any symptoms at all. Other people may have elevated body temperature (fever), cough, and/or difficulty of breathing. We do not

know enough about the 2019-nCoV to know what percentage of people have no symptoms, mild symptoms, or severe symptoms.

Is the 2019 novel coronavirus fatal?

We are still learning about how dangerous this virus is. Like influenza and other respiratory viruses, the 2019-nCoV can cause pneumonia, severe lung disease, multi-organ failure, and death. The risk of being severe is probably greatest in older people and those with underlying chronic illnesses, but we do not know enough to say this for sure.

How does the virus spread?

We are still learning about how the virus is transmitted.

In other coronavirus infections, the virus spreads primarily from person to person via respiratory droplets: an infected person coughs or sneezes, releasing small virus particles in the air that land in an uninfected person's eyes, nose, or mouth. Infected persons can also transmit the virus through their hands. When an infected person touches an uninfected person's hands, small virus particles are passed from the infected person's hands to the uninfected person's hands. If the uninfected person touches their eyes, nose, or mouth, the virus particles are transmitted into their body.

After a person has been infected, it may take 2–14 days until they develop any symptoms.



Has anyone in Africa been infected with 2019-nCoV?

As of 6 February 2020, there were no confirmed cases in Africa. It is possible that there are persons in Africa who have been infected but not yet diagnosed. Monitor Africa CDC and WHO websites for up to date information.

What is Africa CDC doing about the 2019-nCoV disease?

Africa CDC has been monitoring the outbreak closely and discussing with Member States about their needs. Currently, Africa CDC is:

- buying and distributing testing kits to laboratories in Africa;
- providing guidance to Member States about how to prevent infections from spreading in communities and in hospitals;
- strengthening screening at airports and with airlines;
- providing up-to-date information via electronic messaging, social media, and conference calls to Member States.

Am I at risk for 2019-nCoV infection in Africa?

The 2019-nCoV virus is spreading rapidly around the world. The risk is greatest for those who have recently traveled to one of the affected areas or to those who have close contact with someone with 2019-nCoV infection.

Where can I get a trusted information about this disease?

You should monitor your Ministry of Health website, trusted news sources, and the Africa CDC and World Health Organization websites regularly for updates about the virus in your area.

How can I protect myself from being infected with the virus?

There are several things you can do to protect yourself against infection with all respiratory viruses:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
- Make sure you have received all recommended vaccines.
- If the influenza vaccine is available in your community, you should try to obtain it. Influenza virus causes symptoms similar to 2019-nCoV. If you can prevent influenza infection, you can also reduce the likelihood of needing to visit a health care facility for evaluation of respiratory infection.

If you develop fever, cough, and/or difficulty in breathing:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with your arm/elbow or tissue paper.
- If you have mild symptoms, stay at home. Do not go to school, to work, or to other public places until you are completely free of all symptoms. Guidance for how to care for yourself or others at home is available from WHO at [https://www.who.int/internal-publications-detail/home-care-for-patients-with-suspected-novel-coronavirus-\(nCoV\)-infection-presenting-with-mild-symptoms-and-management-of-contacts](https://www.who.int/internal-publications-detail/home-care-for-patients-with-suspected-novel-coronavirus-(nCoV)-infection-presenting-with-mild-symptoms-and-management-of-contacts)
- If you have more severe symptoms (such as difficulty in breathing), cover your mouth with a mask or scarf. Go to a medical facility and immediately notify the first person you encounter (even a security guard) that you are worried that you have a respiratory infection.



What should I do if I had close contact with someone who is infected with 2019-nCoV?

Monitor your symptoms closely. If you develop fever, cough, and/or difficulty in breathing, follow the advice above. Also, make sure you tell your medical clinic that you have had contact with someone with 2019-nCoV.

Is it safe to travel to China or other countries where 2019-nCoV cases have occurred?

As of 6 February 2020, the Chinese Government is restricting travel in Hubei Province and some other areas. Please review information from the Chinese Government and your government regarding travel to China.

What if I recently traveled to Wuhan, China and got sick?

You should report to your local health authorities about your travel history and illness. The health authorities will advise you about your care and treatment, and they will also follow and monitor your close contacts, including family members, for possible illness. If your family, friends, or close colleagues develop a similar illness, they should tell their health care provider about their contact history with someone who had travelled to Wuhan.

Is there a vaccine for 2019-nCoV?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. Scientists are working on developing a vaccine.

What are the treatments for 2019-nCoV disease?

There is no specific medication to treat 2019-nCoV. If you have a mild illness, you can take medication to reduce your fever and to suppress your cough. If you have more severe illness, your doctor may provide other treatments to support your health, such as oxygen to help with breathing and antibiotics to treat a bacterial infection.

Should I be tested for 2019-nCoV infection?

Most people with fever, cough, and/or difficulty in breathing do not have 2019-nCoV disease. There are many infections, such as influenza, that cause similar symptoms. As of 6 February 2020, the only people who should be tested are people with symptoms and have a close contact with 2019-nCoV or a history of traveling to one of the affected areas. Recommendations for testing may change.

How do you test a person for 2019-nCoV infection?

The most common test involves collecting a sample from the back of a person's nose or throat, then performing a special test called polymerase chain reaction (PCR) to detect the virus.

What should health care providers and health departments do?

The experience of the SARS and MERS outbreaks teaches us that all health care facilities must:

- a. Screen people for fever, cough, and shortness of breath at the points of entry into a health facility.
- b. If a person is found to have fever, cough, or shortness of breath, they should immediately be asked to wear a simple face mask and placed in a separate area of the facility, ideally a private room, for evaluation.
- c. Patients with mild illness and no other severe illnesses can be discharged home. They should be instructed to stay home, cover their cough and sneeze with their arm/elbow or tissue paper, and wash their hands regularly. They should only return for medical care if they develop more severe symptoms or if their illness does not resolve.
- d. Patients who require hospitalization should be placed in a private room. If no private room is available, then:
 - i. The patient should wear a simple face mask at all times, if they are able to tolerate wearing the mask.
 - ii. The patient should be kept at least one metre away from other patients.
 - iii. If the climate is temperate, the hospital should consider creating a small outdoor area for patients with 2019-nCoV infection.

What about animals or animal products imported from China?

As of 6 February 2020, there is no known risk of 2019-nCoV infection from animals or animal products imported from China.