

What is novel coronavirus?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a virus strain that has only spread in people since December 2019. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

How does novel coronavirus spread?

Health experts are still learning the details about how this new coronavirus spreads. Other coronaviruses spread from an infected person to others through:

- The air by coughing and sneezing.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.
- In rare cases, contact with feces (poop).

How severe is novel coronavirus?

Experts are still learning about the range of illness from novel coronavirus. Reported cases have ranged from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires hospitalization. So far, deaths have been reported mainly in older adults who had other health conditions.

What are the symptoms?

People who have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after they are exposed to the virus:

Fever



Cough



Difficulty breathing



When do I seek medical evaluation and advice?

If you have symptoms like cough, fever, or other respiratory problems, contact your regular doctor first. **Do not go to the emergency room.** Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs.

If you have difficulty breathing, it doesn't mean you have novel coronavirus, but you should call 911.

If you're over 60 and you have underlying conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease, come up with a plan with your doctor to identify your health risks for coronavirus and how to manage symptoms. Call your doctor right away if you do have symptoms.

How can I protect myself from novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- Wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while you are sick, and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.



If you are traveling overseas follow the CDC's guidance: www.cdc.gov/travel.

Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent novel coronavirus infections.

How is novel coronavirus treated?

There are no medications specifically approved for coronavirus. Most people with mild coronavirus illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. However, some cases develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.

For more information:

www.whatcomcounty.us/ncov

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