



COVID-19: FAQs you can use

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1. What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as '2019 novel coronavirus' or '2019-nCoV.' The official name of the virus is now SARS-Coronavirus-2" or short "SARS-CoV-2" This COVID-19 causing virus is a new virus for humans, linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and some types of common cold.

Source: IFRC Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools
<https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/key-messages-actions-covid-19-prevention-control-schools/>

2. How does COVID-19 spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs, speaks, sneezes or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1.5 metre or 6 feet away from a person who is sick, as these droplets can land within that distance.

Source: UN COVID-19 Response FAQs
<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/covid-19-faqs>

3. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia or breathing difficulties. This is not a complete list of COVID-19 symptoms, as information is evolving and being updated frequently. Your local health ministry or office can provide you with the latest information as it becomes available. COVID-19 symptoms are similar to the flu (influenza) or the common cold, which are a lot more common than COVID-19. This is why testing is required to confirm if someone has COVID-19.



Source: UN COVID-19 Response FAQs

<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/covid-19-faqs>

4. Are the symptoms of COVID-19 different in children than in adults?

No. The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar in children and adults. However, children with confirmed COVID-19 have generally presented with mild symptoms. Reported symptoms in children include cold-like symptoms, such as fever, runny nose, and cough. Vomiting and diarrhea have also been reported. It's not known yet whether some children may be at higher risk for severe illness, for example, children with underlying medical conditions and special healthcare needs. There is much more to be learned about how the disease impacts children.

Source: UN COVID-19 Response FAQs

<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/covid-19-faqs>

5. Who is most at risk from COVID-19?

We are learning more about how COVID-19 affects people every day. The risk of becoming infected with SARS-CoV-2 depends on your environment and your behavior. Older people, and people with chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease, appear to be more at risk of developing severe symptoms. The percentage of men who die because of COVID-19 also seems to be higher. As this is a new virus, we are still learning about how it affects people. While some children and infants have been sick with COVID-19, adults make up most of the known cases to date.

Source: CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 Basics

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#How-COVID-19-Spreads>

6. What is the treatment for COVID-19?

There are no drugs licensed for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19. WHO is coordinating efforts to develop and evaluate medicines to treat COVID-19.

Source: WHO Coronavirus Advice for the Public

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>



7. What can I do to protect myself and my family from COVID-19?

You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and clean water. Why? Washing your hands with soap and clean water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
- Maintain at least 1.5 metre/ six feet distance between yourself and others. Why? When someone coughs, sneezes, or speaks they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person has the disease.
- Avoid going to crowded places. Why? Where people come together in crowds, you are more likely to come into close contact with someone that has COVID-19 and it is more difficult to maintain physical distance of 1.5 metre/ six feet.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and infect you.
- Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands. Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.
- Stay home and self-isolate even with minor symptoms such as cough, headache, mild fever, until you recover. Have someone bring you supplies. If you need to leave your house, wear a mask to avoid infecting others. Why? Avoiding contact with others will protect them from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.
- If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention, but call your health authority's official toll-free telephone number in advance if possible and follow their guidance. Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.
- Keep up to date on the latest information from trusted sources, such as WAHO, WHO and your local and national health authorities. Why? Local and national authorities are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves.



Source: WHO COVID-19 Advice for the Public

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

8. My region is easing lockdown restrictions. Do I still need to be concerned about COVID-19?

Yes. The virus is likely to be circulating for a long time, and public health and social measures – including physical distancing, wearing of masks, and the isolation of people who are sick – are critical to slowing the spread of disease. COVID-19 is likely to be with us over the long term, and prevention measures will need to be sustained.

Source: African Union Guidance on easing lockdown

<https://africacdc.org/download/guidance-on-easing-lockdown/>

9. Is a cloth face covering useful in preventing the spread of COVID-19?

Yes. Wearing a cloth face covering may prevent you from spreading respiratory droplets when talking, sneezing, or coughing. If everyone wears a cloth face covering when out in public – such as when going to the grocery or market – the risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 can be reduced for the community.

Source: US CDC Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

10. Should I avoid shaking hands because of COVID-19?

Yes. Respiratory viruses can be passed by shaking hands and touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Greet people with a wave, a nod, or a bow instead.

Source: https://www.who.int/images/default-source/health-topics/coronavirus/risk-communications/general-public/handshaking.png?sfvrsn=4aed53c5_2

11. How can I grocery shop safely in the time of COVID-19?

When you are grocery shopping, keep at least a 1.5 metre/ six feet distance from others and avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose. Once home, wash your hands thoroughly and also after handling and storing the products you have purchased.



Source: WHO Coronavirus Mythbusters [https://www.who.int/images/default-source/health-topics/coronavirus/eng-mythbusting-ncov-\(19\).tmb-1920v.png](https://www.who.int/images/default-source/health-topics/coronavirus/eng-mythbusting-ncov-(19).tmb-1920v.png)

12. Can COVID-19 be spread through coins and banknotes?

Respiratory droplets expelled from an infected person can contaminate and persist on surfaces. Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly after touching any frequently touched surface or object, including coins and banknotes. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose if your hands are not cleaned.

Source: WHO Coronavirus MythBusters [https://www.who.int/images/default-source/health-topics/coronavirus/eng-mythbusting-ncov-\(23\).tmb-1920v.png](https://www.who.int/images/default-source/health-topics/coronavirus/eng-mythbusting-ncov-(23).tmb-1920v.png)

13. How should I wash fruit and vegetables in the time of COVID-19?

Before handling them, wash your hands with soap and clean water. Then wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly with clean water, especially if the you eat them raw. As always, food safety is important regardless of what is on your plate. Be sure to clean and cook meats and animal products thoroughly, and wash your hands, cookware and utensils with soap after handling any kind of food.

Source: WHO Coronavirus MythBusters [https://www.who.int/images/default-source/health-topics/coronavirus/eng-mythbusting-ncov-\(13\).tmb-1920v.png](https://www.who.int/images/default-source/health-topics/coronavirus/eng-mythbusting-ncov-(13).tmb-1920v.png)

14. Can people who have been quarantined for COVID-19 spread the illness to others?

Someone who has been released from COVID-19 quarantine is not considered a major risk for spreading the virus to others because they have not developed illness during the incubation period. Quarantine means separating a person or group of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease but have not developed illness (symptoms) from others who have NOT been exposed, to prevent the possible spread of that disease.

For COVID-19, the period of quarantine is usually 14 days from the last date of exposure because the incubation period for this virus is 2 to 14 days.

Source: COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

US CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Coronavirus-Disease-2019-Basics>



15. Can the virus that causes COVID-19 be spread through food – such as food from street vendors or restaurant takeaway?

Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread from person to person through respiratory droplets. Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. Before preparing or eating any kind of food, it is important to always wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds for general food safety. Throughout the day use a tissue to cover your coughing or sneezing, and wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, or going to the bathroom.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, like a packaging container, that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Source: US CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 Basics

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Coronavirus-Disease-2019-Basics>

16. How can pregnant or breastfeeding women protect themselves against COVID-19?

Pregnant women may be at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 compared to others who are not pregnant. It is especially important for people at increased risk of severe illness, including pregnant women and those who live with them, to protect themselves from getting COVID-19.

The best ways to protect yourself and to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 are to limit your interactions with other people as much as possible, and take precautions to prevent getting COVID-19 when you interact with others.

Everyone should:

- Wash your hands often
- Avoid close contact with others
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when you are around others
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect the surfaces you touch
- Monitor your health and be alert for symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath. This is not a complete list of COVID-19 symptoms, as information is evolving and being updated frequently. Your local health ministry or office can provide you with the latest information as it becomes available.



Source: US CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) How to Protect Yourself and Others
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

17. Is it safe for me to breastfeed if I have COVID-19?

Breast milk provides protection against many illnesses and is the best source of nutrition for most infants. We do not know if mothers with COVID-19 can spread the virus to babies in their breast milk, but limited data suggests this is not likely.

If you have COVID-19 and choose to breastfeed, wear a face covering while breastfeeding and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before each feeding.

Source: US CDC: If You Are Pregnant, Breastfeeding, or Caring for Young Children
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>

18. Is it safe to conduct a funeral during the COVID-19 pandemic?

In some situations, many people have become sick with COVID-19 after attending a funeral service. To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in communities, changes need to be made in the way funerals, visitations, and memorials to the deceased are held.

- Consider modifying funeral arrangements, such as limiting the number of people who attend to a small number of immediate family;
- Consider holding funeral gatherings outdoors or in a large well-ventilated area;
- Practice physical distancing by maintaining at least 1.5 metres or six feet between people; and
- Wear face coverings

Avoid touching, hugging, or kissing the body of a deceased person who had confirmed or suspected COVID-19 before and during body preparation, especially if you or a member of your household are at [higher risk](#) of severe illness from COVID-19.

If the deceased person had confirmed or suspected COVID-19, avoid kissing, washing, or shrouding the body before, during, and after the body has been prepared. Take precautions, including the wearing of face coverings, if participating in these activities is part of important religious or cultural practices.



People at higher risk of severe illness, including older people and people with underlying medical conditions, should not be involved in rituals that involve touching a deceased person's body.

Source: US CDC Funeral Guidance for Individuals and Families

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/funeral-guidance.html>

19. I shop in a market where it is impossible for me to keep a physical distance of 1.5 metres or six feet away from other people. What should I do?

The purpose of physical distancing and the wearing of face coverings is to reduce the contact between people who may be sick with COVID-19 and those who are not sick. For many people, physical distancing presents challenges to everyday life. In these cases, other prevention measures can help achieve the goal of reducing contact between people in situations where physical distancing is difficult or impossible. These measures include:

- Avoiding large gatherings of people whenever it is possible;
- Wearing a face covering when you leave your home;
- Ensuring that elderly people, and people in other high-risk groups, are isolated from family members who leave the home and may be exposed to others who may be sick with COVID-19; and
- Washing your hands frequently.

Source: *Social Distancing Policy in Low-Income Countries*; Yale University School of Management <https://som.yale.edu/sites/default/files/mushifiq-howell-v2.pdf>

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