Special Topic
Understanding Coronavirus

The CDC is currently responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a new coronavirus. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a virus that causes respiratory illnesses such as bronchitis and lung infection (pneumonia).

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after contact with the virus. Symptoms can include:
- Fever
- Coughing
- Trouble breathing

Some people can have the virus but only show mild symptoms or no symptoms at all.

What are the possible complications?

This virus is particularly dangerous for those who already have respiratory or lung disease. In many cases, this virus can cause infection (pneumonia) in both lungs. In some cases, this can cause serious complications if not properly managed by a physician.

How is COVID-19 diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will ask about your symptoms, recent travel, and contact with infected people. Testing for the virus is done through the CDC so your provider would work with the CDC to test you for COVID-19 if they suspect you may have been impacted.

ARE YOU AT RISK?

If you've been to a place where people have been sick with this virus, you are at risk for infection.

You are also at risk if you:
- Recently traveled to China
- Had contact with a sick person who recently traveled to this area
- Had contact with a person who was diagnosed with COVID-19

Call your healthcare provider if you've recently traveled and have any of the symptoms listed here.

To find out more about COVID-19, visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

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How is COVID-19 treated?

Like most viruses, there is currently no medicine to treat coronavirus. However, there are treatments available that will help your body while it fights the virus. This is known as supportive care.

Supportive care may include:
- Pain medicine such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen can help ease pain and reduce fever.
- Bed rest helps your body fight the illness.

For severe illness, you may need to stay in the hospital. Care during severe illness may include:
- IV (intravenous) fluids may be provided to help keep your body hydrated.
- Supplemental oxygen or ventilation with a breathing machine (ventilator) may be given. This is done to keep enough oxygen in your body.

How can COVID-19 be prevented?

The best prevention is to avoid contact with the virus and practice good hygiene. There is not yet a vaccination for the COVID-19.

If you are in an area with COVID-19:
- Wash your hands often or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer often.
- Only touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with clean hands.
- Don't have contact with people who are sick.
- Wash your hands after touching any animals.
- Don't share eating or drinking tools with sick people.
- Don't kiss someone who is sick.
- Clean surfaces often with disinfectant.
- Keep watch for symptoms of the virus and tell your provider right away if you have symptoms.

If you were in an area with COVID-19 and have a fever or other symptoms:
- Don't panic. Keep in mind that other illnesses can cause similar symptoms.
- Call your healthcare provider. Explain that you may have been exposed to COVID-19 and have symptoms. Do this before going to any hospital.
- Tell the healthcare staff about recent travel. This includes local travel on public transport. Staff may need to find other people you have been in contact with.
- Follow all instructions the healthcare staff give you.