
Coronavirus (COVID-19): Your Questions Answered

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has changed daily life. New information comes out every day, and it can feel overwhelming at times. Here are answers to some questions you may have.

How Does Coronavirus (COVID-19) Spread?

People can catch coronavirus from others who are infected, even if they don't have any symptoms. This happens when an infected person sneezes or coughs, sending tiny droplets into the air. These can land in the nose or mouth of someone nearby.

Some even smaller droplets can linger in the air for minutes to hours. These are called aerosols. People send aerosols into the air when they talk or breathe. Aerosols can travel on air currents away from where they started. So coronavirus sometimes can spread by aerosols. This is more likely to happen when an infected person spends a long time indoors, in a space with poor ventilation.

People also might get infected if they touch an infected droplet on a surface and then touch their own nose, mouth, or eyes.

Experts are looking at whether the virus can spread through stool (poop).

What Are the Signs & Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

COVID-19 can cause a range of symptoms, including:

- fever
- cough
- trouble breathing
- symptoms of a cold such as a sore throat, congestion, or a runny nose
- chills
- muscle pain
- headache
- a loss of taste or smell
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea
- tiredness

The virus can be more serious in some people. And some people have no symptoms at all.

Some kids are having symptoms caused by inflammation throughout the body, sometimes several weeks after they were infected with the virus. This is called multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C). Doctors are trying to find out how these symptoms are related to coronavirus infection.

Symptoms seen in kids who have MIS-C include:

- fever
- belly pain
- vomiting or diarrhea
- neck pain
- a rash
- red eyes
- feeling very tired
- red, cracked lips
- swollen hands or feet
- swollen glands (lymph nodes)

Kids who are very sick with MIS-C may have trouble breathing, pain or pressure in the chest, bluish lips or face, confusion, or trouble staying awake.

Most kids with MIS-C get better after they get special care in the hospital, sometimes in the ICU (intensive care unit).

Can Someone Who's Infected Spread Coronavirus (COVID-19) if They Don't Have Symptoms?

The virus spreads most easily when an infected person has symptoms. But it also can spread before symptoms start. It can take 2–14 days after someone is exposed to the virus for symptoms to show up.

The closer you are to someone who is infected with coronavirus, and the longer you're together, the higher your risk of also getting infected.

Who Is at Risk for Severe Coronavirus (COVID-19) Disease?

Experts are still learning about COVID-19. There are far fewer cases of the virus reported in children. Usually, the virus causes a milder illness in kids, though some children have become pretty sick.

Most of the people who have died from coronavirus were older adults or people with other health problems, such as heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes.

What Should I Do if My Child Has Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Call your doctor if your child has a fever, cough, sore throat, belly pain, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, dizziness, or just doesn't feel well. If your child has been near someone with coronavirus or lived in or traveled to an area where lots of people have coronavirus, tell the doctor. The doctor can decide whether your child:

- should get tested for the infection
- can be treated at home
- should come in for a visit
- can have a video or telehealth visit

In a telehealth visit, a health care provider can see your child on video while you stay at home. If you can, choose a telehealth provider who specializes in caring for kids. If the doctor thinks your child needs care right away, they will guide you on where to go. When possible, check for telehealth in your area before anyone in your family is sick.

How Is Coronavirus (COVID-19) Treated?

There is no specific medicine for COVID-19. Most people who have it get better at home with plenty of liquids, rest, and comfort. Some people get very ill and need treatment in the hospital.

COVID-19 vaccines are now available for people 12 and older. Everyone should get vaccinated as soon as they are eligible. Studies are under way to see if the vaccines are safe and effective in younger children.

What Can Parents Do?

Common steps that help prevent the spread of germs also work well against COVID-19. It's always wise to:

- Wash hands well and often. Wash for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid people who appear sick.
- Clean surfaces that get touched a lot (like doorknobs, counters, phones, etc.).

Where Can I Learn More About Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) websites for up-to-date, reliable information about coronavirus.

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