Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)

There is an ongoing outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a new coronavirus that was first detected in China and which has now been detected in almost 70 locations internationally, including in the United States. The virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes has been named “coronavirus disease 2019” (abbreviated “COVID-19”).

How is the virus spread?
The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object 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.

How severe is the illness?
The complete clinical picture with regard to COVID-19 is not fully understood. The most common symptoms are fevers, cough and difficulty breathing. Reported illnesses have ranged from mild to severe, including illness resulting in death. While information so far suggests that most COVID-19 illness is mild, reports out of China suggests serious illness occurs in 16% of cases. Older people and people with certain underlying health conditions like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, for example, seem to be at greater risk of serious illness.

How to protect yourself and others?
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Practice respiratory hygiene (Cover your cough or sneeze with a bent elbow or tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash).
- Follow CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask.
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  - However, if you are a transplant patient or a person with weak immune system you may consider wearing a face mask when likely to be around persons who may be sick.
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.
  - The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Stay home when you are sick.
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical advice early, but call in advance and follow the directions of your healthcare provider.
- Stay informed and follow advice given by your healthcare provider, your national and local health authority since they can provide you with reliable information on whether COVID-19 is spreading in your area.
- People who think they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider immediately.
Additional Resources for Up-to-Date Information

Henry Ford Health System: COVID-19


Centers for Disease Control (CDC)


World Health Organization (WHO)
Advice for the public: https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public

American Society of Transplantation (AST)
Frequently asked questions for transplant recipients