CORONAVIRUS (COVID19) FACT SHEET

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

This viral infection has resulted in thousands of confirmed human infections, with the vast majority of cases in China. Other countries, including the United States, have identified a growing number of cases in people who have traveled to China.

More recently, transmission has been noted in some countries that has not been directly linked to cases in China, indicating community-level transmission in some places.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

Yes. COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in parts of the United States. Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

What is a pandemic?

A pandemic simply means that a disease or illness is widespread. It is not an indicator of the health effects in people that contract the illness.

How does coronavirus spread?

The new coronavirus spreads primarily through contact with an infected person when they cough or sneeze, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

This coronavirus causes a respiratory (lung) infection. Symptoms of this infection include:

- Fever
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- In severe cases, pneumonia (infection in the lungs).

While most people recover from this infection, some infections can lead to severe disease or death. Older people and those with pre-existing medical problems seem to have a greater risk for severe disease.

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What are the treatments? Is there a vaccine?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19, other than supportive care and relief of symptoms. Currently, there is no vaccine available to protect people from infection with the virus that causes COVID-19.

How can I help protect myself?

People can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Do not share towels and wash clothes at home. Use disposable towels to dry hands when practical.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, what should you do?

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Should I wear a mask when I go out in public?

The health risk to remains low. The CDC and other public health agencies are not recommending that people wear masks when they are in public. Masks can be useful to prevent someone who has a respiratory illness from spreading it to others but there is no hard evidence that wearing a mask protects the wearer outside of the healthcare setting.

Where can I find additional information?

https://www.cdc.gov/media/dpk/diseases-and-conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus-2020.html

https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/

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