

Coronavirus Corner

March 11, 2020



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



<p>What is Coronavirus?</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>What are the Symptoms of COVID-19?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fever • cough • shortness of breath
<p>How does the disease spread?</p>	<p>The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. Current knowledge is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most often, person-to-person spread is thought to happen among people in close contact (about 6 feet) with each other. • Person-to-person spread is thought to occur mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. • How easily a virus spreads person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (like measles), while other viruses are less so. • 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. • Typically, with most respiratory viruses, people are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (sickest).
<p>What is the Treatment?</p>	<p>There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19 at this time. Medical care can help to relieve symptoms. There is active work on antiviral medication and vaccine development.</p>
<p>What is my risk?</p>	<p>We continue to believe the immediate risk of COVID-19 exposure to the general public is low, however, CDC, MDH, Public Health, and your local providers are undertaking measures to help keep that risk low. We have plans in place and are updating these in real time as information becomes available.</p>
<p>What is MDH doing?</p>	<p>MDH has a strong disease surveillance system in place that includes partnerships with hospital and clinic systems. Finding cases quickly and responding to them effectively is key.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending information to health care providers with recommendations for screening and testing • Updating providers and local public health with new information • Monitoring travelers for symptoms • Outreach to area schools
<p>What is Public Health doing?</p>	<p>Public Health emergency preparedness plans are in place for situations such as this where people in our county may need self-isolation and/or quarantine measures. We have recently reviewed our plans and feel prepared to provide monitoring, if needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly calls with MDH for updates and recommendations • Meetings/calls to collaborate with the county Health and Medical Group (includes county medical partners, emergency managers and law enforcement) • Providing updates to area providers, as needed • Updating internal staff • Following and distributing recommendations from MDH and CDC
<p>What about masks?</p>	<p>CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected. The use of facemasks also is</p>

	<p>crucial for health workers and other people who are taking care of someone infected with COVID-19 in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).</p>
<p>What can I do?</p>	<p>Basic general public health recommendations are very important in the setting of an outbreak of a new communicable disease. Measures that can be used to <u>decrease and slow</u> the spread of any virus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. ✓ 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. There are no current recommendations for use of specific cleaners.
<p>Where can I find credible information?</p>	<p>Minnesota Department of Health Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</p>