



DISEASE PREVENTION

COVID-19 (COVID)

What is COVID?

COVID is a respiratory illness caused by a virus named SAR-CoV-2.

How is COVID spread?

COVID can spread when someone talks, coughs, or sneezes, sending tiny droplets into the air. If these droplets get into someone else's mouth or nose, they can get sick too. You can also catch COVID by touching surfaces that have the virus on them and then touching your face.

When is COVID Season?

COVID season generally starts during fall and peaks in the winter, but the timing and severity of the season can vary from year to year.

Who gets COVID?

Every year, individuals in our community become sick with COVID. Repeat infections may occur throughout life, and people of any age can be infected.

When and for how long is a person able to spread COVID?

People are usually contagious for 5 to 7 days and may become contagious a day or two before they start showing signs of illness.

However, some older adults, and people with weakened immune systems, can continue to spread the virus even after they stop showing symptoms, for as long as 4 weeks.

How soon after you are exposed to COVID do symptoms appear?

People infected with COVID usually show symptoms within 2 to 14 days after getting infected.



What are the symptoms of COVID?

People infected with COVID usually have mild symptoms and can manage their symptoms on their own.

Symptoms of COVID infection usually include the following:

- Fever or chills
- Coughing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or Body Aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore Throat
- Shortness of Breath
- Headache
- Diarrhea
- Congestion or Runny Nose
- Nausea and/or Vomiting



Some people are at higher risk for serious complications from COVID and should talk to a healthcare provider right away if experiencing any COVID symptoms. Taking antiviral medicine to treat COVID may shorten the length of your illness and help prevent more-serious problems.

In rare cases, individuals may develop serious complications with severe symptoms that require immediate medical attention.

Emergency symptoms may include:

- Trouble Breathing
- New Confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Pale, gray or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds

What can be done to prevent the spread of the COVID?

1. Practice good hand, coughing, and sneezing hygiene.

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing, sneezing, or touching surfaces in public areas. When soap and water are not available, hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of tissues properly and wash your hands immediately afterward.

2. Stay home when sick.

- Return to normal activities when your symptoms are better overall, and you have not had a fever for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medicine.
- It is recommended you wear a mask for 5 days without a fever when returning to normal activities.

3. Stay up to date with COVID immunizations. When are you up to date?

- Children aged 6 months to 4 years: all recommended doses, including at least 1 dose of updated 2023–2024 COVID–19 vaccine.
- People aged 5 to 65 years: 1 updated 2023–2024 COVID vaccine.
- Seniors aged 65 and older: 2 updated 2023–2024 COVID vaccine doses. Seniors 65 and older who have not previously received any COVID vaccine doses and choose to get Novavax should get 2 doses of updated Novavax vaccine, followed by 1 additional dose of any updated 2023–2024 COVID vaccine to be up to date.

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Information adapted from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov/RSV

