



MARTHA'S VINEYARD
HOSPITAL

Frequently Asked Questions COVID- 19

Updated: Thursday March 5, 2020

Q: What is the COVID-19 virus?

A: COVID-19 is a new infectious disease, caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. It is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold. COVID-19 is the abbreviation for coronavirus disease 2019. In COVID- 19, 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus and 'D' for disease.

Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

A: The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are mild symptoms, including a runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever and severe cases, difficulty breathing. Symptoms may appear 2-24 days after exposure.

Q: How does the virus spread?

A: The virus is thought to spread mainly from person to person through droplets (from coughs or sneezes) that can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest). Some spread may be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with COVID- 19, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Additionally, 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.

Q: Can someone who has had COVID-19 spread the illness to others?

A: Someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 can spread the illness to others. That is why CDC recommends that these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home (depending on how sick they are) until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

How long someone is actively sick can vary so the decision on when to release someone from isolation is made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with doctors, infection prevention and

control experts, and public health officials and involves considering specifics of each situation including disease severity, illness signs and symptoms, and results of laboratory testing for that patient.

Q: Can someone who has been quarantined for COVID-19 spread the illness to others?

A: Quarantine means separating a person or group of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease but have not developed illness (symptoms) from others who have not been exposed, in order to prevent the possible spread of that disease. Quarantine is usually established for the incubation period of the communicable disease, which is the span of time during which people have developed illness after exposure. For COVID-19, the period of quarantine is 14 days from the last date of exposure, because 14 days is the longest incubation period seen for similar coronaviruses. Someone who has been released from COVID-19 quarantine is not considered a risk for spreading the virus to others because they have not developed illness during the incubation period.

Q: Can the virus that causes COVID-19 be spread through food, including refrigerated or frozen food?

A: Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. Before preparing or eating food it is important to always wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds for general food safety. Throughout the day wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, or going to the bathroom.

In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from food products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient, refrigerated, or frozen temperatures.

Q: Am I at risk for COVID-19 in the United States?

A: This is a rapidly evolving situation and the [risk assessment](#) may change daily. The latest updates are available on CDC's Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) website.

Q: Does CDC recommend the use of facemask to prevent COVID-19?

A: 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 is 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).

Q: What do I do if I feel ill?

A: Call your primary care provider. Do not go to your physician's office without calling ahead and making a plan for your next steps of care. If you feel your symptoms are severe (difficulty breathing), go to the emergency room with a mask (if one is available) if not obtain a mask

upon entering the building and use hand sanitizer. Remember to avoid contact with others if you are ill.

Q: What can I do to prevent me and my loved ones from contracting the coronavirus?

A: Wash your hands, wash your hands, and wash your hands. This is by far the best protection from any virus, including the coronavirus. 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. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

Also:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- 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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Q: Do I have to self-isolate if I have recently traveled?

A: The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has revised their recommendations and are now recommending that all people returning from a level 3 country (China, Italy, Iran and South Korea) self-isolate for 14 day after leaving that country. If symptoms develop, they should contact their health care provider.