

General Questions

1. What are coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can cause illness in people and animals. The common cold is an example of a coronavirus.

2. What is the novel coronavirus?

A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

3. What is SARS-CoV-2?

SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19. "SARS" stands for severe acute respiratory syndrome, "CoV" stands for coronavirus. This virus is similar to the SARS virus that emerged in China in 2002, hence the number "2."

4. What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 ("Coronavirus Disease 2019") is an infectious respiratory disease caused by a new (novel) coronavirus that initially emerged in Wuhan Province, China in December 2019.

5. What are the symptoms?

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed COVID-19 cases. Most patients with confirmed COVID-19 have developed fever (subjective or confirmed) and/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing). There have also been reports of asymptomatic infection with COVID-19.

6. How is it spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads person to person. At this time, it seems that respiratory droplets are the primary driver of disease transmission. Continued research around the world aims to better understand the dynamics of SARS-CoV-2 transmission.

7. How soon after exposure do symptoms occur?

Symptoms typically appear 2-14 days after exposure.

8. Who is at risk for COVID-19?

Currently, those at greatest risk of infection are persons who have had prolonged, unprotected close contact with a patient with symptomatic, confirmed COVID-19. These include healthcare workers and household members. Those who live in or have recently been to areas with sustained transmission are also at increased risk.

9. What does persons under investigation (PUI)? Are they being quarantined?

A PUI is a person who is showing signs of illness similar to COVID-19 and are considered to be at risk of being exposed to the virus. As such, they are in the process of being tested for the virus that causes COVID-19.

10. What are the most reliable sources of COVID-19 information?

For those with access to the internet, the best sources of up-to-date information are the Virginia Department of Health website (www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>) or type coronavirus.gov into the URL window. You can call 877-ASK-VDH3 for additional information.

11. Will warm weather stop the outbreak of COVID-19?

It is not yet known whether weather and temperature impact the spread of COVID-19. Some other viruses, like the common cold and flu, spread more during cold weather months, but that does not mean it is impossible to become sick with these viruses during other months.

12. Why might someone blame or avoid individuals and groups (create stigma) because of COVID-19?

People in the U.S. may be worried or anxious about friends and relatives who are living in or visiting areas where COVID-19 is spreading. Some people are worried about the disease. Fear and anxiety can lead to social stigma, for example, towards Chinese or other Asian Americans or people who were in quarantine.

Stigma is discrimination against an identifiable group of people, a place, or a nation. Stigma is associated with a lack of knowledge about how COVID-19 spreads, a need to blame someone, fears about disease and death, and gossip that spreads rumors and myths. Stigma hurts everyone by creating more fear or anger towards ordinary people instead of the disease that is causing the problem.

13. How can people stop stigma associated with COVID-19?

People can fight stigma and help, not hurt, others by providing social support. Counter stigma by learning and sharing facts. Communicating the facts that viruses do not target specific racial or ethnic groups and how COVID-19 actually spreads can help stop stigma.

14. Where can I find more information about the coronavirus and COVID-19?

Check out the following websites:

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

Virginia Questions

15. What is the current status of COVID-19 in Virginia? Has anyone been infected?

As of March 11, 2020, there are 9 presumptive cases. This situation is rapidly evolving. For the most up to date information, check the [VDH website](#), which is updated daily.

16. What is VDH doing to prepare for COVID-19?

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is working closely with local, state and federal government partners, community partners, first responders, healthcare providers, and emergency management partners, to respond to this public health threat.

VDH is also working to prepare state and local health departments, health care systems, businesses, schools, colleges and universities, and the general public in the event that widespread transmission of COVID-19 occurs.

17. What is VDH doing to respond to COVID-19?

See answer above, also: When illness is reported to VDH, our epidemiologists work to investigate the illness. When indicated, VDH assists with testing for COVID-19. If a case of illness is identified, they will also work to identify those who have had close contact with the patient and monitor their health closely.

18. I heard there was a case at X.

This situation is rapidly evolving. For the most up to date information, check the [VDH website](#), which is updated daily.

19. How is VDH protecting people who may have come into contact with a person with COVID-19?

VDH works to rapidly identify persons with COVID-19 and others who have been in close contact with that person. Contacts are assessed as to the types of interactions they have had with a case-patient and monitored closely for the development of disease.

20. Is VDH isolating sick people or quarantining people who have come in contact with sick people?

Yes, when necessary, VDH is isolating people sick with COVID-19 and quarantining people assessed as being at high-risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.

21. I understand the need to protect patient privacy, but could you report the city that people being tested for COVID-19 are in? This would incentivize people living in the area to take extra precautions to prevent the spread of the disease.

The Virginia Department of Health encourages everyone in Virginia to take extra precautions to prevent the spread of infectious respiratory disease, regardless of whether or not COVID-19 has been reported in your location. Take the following routine precautions to help protect against influenza, COVID-19, and other infectious respiratory illnesses:

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
- It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.

22. Where can I find more information about the coronavirus and COVID-19 in Virginia?

VDH is updating their website daily as the situation evolves:

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>

Illness from COVID-19

23. What are the symptoms?

Most patients with confirmed COVID-19 have developed fever (subjective or confirmed) and/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing). Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed COVID-19 cases. There have also been reports of asymptomatic infection with COVID-19.

24. What should I do if I think I might be sick with COVID-19?

Call your healthcare professional if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or if you live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

Your healthcare professional will work with your local health department to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

25. How do you test a person for COVID-19?

Sample swabs are taken from the back of the nasal cavity and oral cavity and tested for the presence of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

26. Who is at risk for serious illness from COVID-19?

While information so far suggests that most COVID-19 illness is mild, a report out of China suggests serious illness occurs in 16% of cases. Older people and people with certain underlying health conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, and immunocompromising conditions, seem to be at greater risk of serious illness.

27. I traveled to an area affected by COVID-19 and have been sick ever since I got back. Should I be tested for the Coronavirus?

Call your healthcare professional if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. Your healthcare professional will work with your local health department to assess your exposure risk and determine if you need to be tested for the virus that causes COVID-19.

28. I traveled to an area not affected by COVID-19 and have been sick ever since I got back. Should I be tested for the Coronavirus?

There are many causes of respiratory illness. If you are sick, it is important that you speak with your healthcare provider. They can evaluate your illness and determine if you might need to be tested for the virus that causes COVID-19.

29. Where can I find more information about symptoms and illness associated with COVID-19?

Check out the following website(s):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>

Testing for COVID-19

30. Should I get tested for COVID-19?

Call your healthcare professional if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or if you live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Your healthcare professional will work with your local health department to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

31. Where can I get tested for COVID-19?

You should call your healthcare provider if you think you need to be tested. Your healthcare provider will work with your local health department to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19. If indicated, they will provide you with information regarding next steps for testing.

32. Can a person test negative and later test positive for COVID-19?

Using the CDC-developed diagnostic test, a negative result means that the virus that causes COVID-19 was not found in the person's sample. In the early stages of infection, it is possible the virus will not be detected. A negative test result for a sample collected while a person has symptoms likely means that the COVID-19 virus is not causing their current illness.

33. Does insurance pay for testing?

Many insurance plans cover the cost of testing and related health care costs. For specific information about your health insurance coverage, call your insurance company. You can usually find their phone number on your insurance card. You will also find information about insurance and Coronavirus costs at <https://www.ahip.org/health-insurance-providers-respond-to-coronavirus-covid-19/>

34. Where can I find more information about COVID-19 testing?

Check out the following websites:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>

Healthcare Providers

See separate VDH COVID-19 Healthcare Provider FAQs, available here:

http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/13/2020/03/Provider_FAQ_03082020.pdf

International Travel

35. Where are the high risk travel areas?

CDC has established geographic risk criteria for the purpose of issuing travel health notices for countries with COVID-19 transmission. A number of factors inform the geographic risk including the size, geographic distribution, and epidemiology of the outbreak. For the most up-to-date information on travel advisories and search for risk assessment for COVID-19 by country, please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

As of March 10, 2020, CDC recommends travelers avoid nonessential travel to China and Iran and states that entry or foreign national from these destinations has been suspended. CDC also recommends avoiding nonessential travel to South Korea and Italy. CDC recommends that older adults or those who have chronic medical conditions consider postponing travel to Japan and that travelers to Hong Kong should practice usual precautions. Additional information can be found on the website above.

36. I am planning to travel to X country in X time? Should I cancel my trip?

CDC provides recommendations on postponing or canceling travel. These are called travel notices and are based on assessment of potential health risks involved with traveling to a certain area. A list of destinations with travel notices is available at:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html.

Warning Level 3: CDC recommends travelers avoid all nonessential travel to

destinations with level 3 travel notices because of the risk of getting COVID-19.

Alert Level 2: Because COVID-19 can be more serious in older adults and those with chronic medical conditions, people in these groups should talk to a healthcare provider and consider postponing travel to destinations with level 2 travel notices.

Watch Level 1: CDC does not recommend canceling or postponing travel to destinations with level 1 travel notices because the risk of COVID-19 is thought to be low. If you travel, take the following routine precautions:

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
- It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.

37. Are layovers included in CDC’s recommendation to avoid nonessential travel?

Yes. Layovers at airports in destinations with level 3 travel notices are included in CDC’s recommendation to avoid nonessential travel. If a layover is unavoidable, CDC recommends that travelers not leave the airport. Travelers with layovers may still be subject to screening and monitoring when entering the United States.

38. I don’t want to travel because of COVID-19. Can you help me get a refund from my airline or cruise line?

Each company establishes its own refund policies, and VDH cannot intervene to get them to change their policies. Some companies may base their policies on CDC’s travel health notices. The decision to post or change the level of a travel health notice is based on the best available science and takes into account numbers of cases, sustained spread, geographic spread of cases, risk to travelers, and other factors.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

In some cases, trip cancellation insurance can protect your financial investment in a trip if you need to change your itinerary in the event of an international outbreak.

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/insurance>.

39. If I fly to country X, am I going to get stuck there, or will I be able to fly back to the U.S.?

This situation is rapidly changing around the globe. It is not possible to predict what travel restrictions other countries may place on persons in their jurisdiction. For the most up-to-date information for travelers, including COVID-19 risk assessments for countries around the globe, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

You will also find helpful information about international travel at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/> or type travel.state.gov in the URL address window. You can search by country for specific information about COVID-19 and other travel issues.

40. My family member is traveling to the U.S. from X country? Will they be allowed to enter the U.S.?

Currently, the United States has restrictions on entry of foreign nationals from China and Iran. Travelers coming from countries other than China and Iran are not under entry restrictions into the United States because of COVID-19.

41. Are people entering the U.S. from X being quarantined?

Depending on a person's travel history, they may be asked to stay home for a period of 14 days after leaving an area with widespread or ongoing community spread (Level 3 Travel Health Notice). Countries that have a Level 3 Travel Health Notice (widespread, ongoing transmission) at this time are China, Iran, Italy and South Korea.

42. How are returning travelers from countries with widespread transmission of COVID-19 being screened when they enter the U.S.?

At this time, American citizens, lawful permanent residents, and family members (as specified in the Presidential Proclamation) who have been in countries with a Level 3 Travel Notice in the preceding 14 days will be allowed to enter the United States. Those travelers will be directed to one of 11 US airports and will be screened for fever and symptoms and asked questions about their travel and exposure. Those travelers will have some level of restriction on their movement depending on their health and travel history.

43. It appears only flights that have contact with China are being observed. Shouldn't South Korea, Italy and Iran be added to persons being observed?

Right now, VDH is receiving notification of returning travelers from China and Iran. Travelers from other countries affected by COVID-19 are undergoing entry screening at U.S. airports. Additionally, they are advised to practice social distancing for 14 days after leaving an affected area, monitor for signs of illness, and contact their local health department if they become ill.

44. My loved one returned from X today and is not reporting any symptoms. What are the best practices to protect our family members who all live close together?

If your loved one is returning from an area with a level 2 or 3 travel health notice, they should take additional actions:

- For level 2 travel health notices, go to http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/13/2020/03/MM_Level_2_Travel_Advisories_3-8-2020_final.pdf.

The Virginia Department of Health recommends the following for the traveler: Monitor your health and limit your interactions with others for the 14 days from the time you left the country identified by CDC as a Level 2 Travel Health Notice country. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Are you having these symptoms?

- For level 3 travel health notices, go to http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/13/2020/03/MM_Level_3_Travel_Advisories_3-9-2020_final.pdf.

The Virginia Department of Health recommends the following for the traveler: Stay at home for 14 days from the time you left an area with widespread, ongoing community spread (identified as a Level 3 Travel Health Notice country) and monitor your health. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, or shortness of breath. If you develop fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Are you having these symptoms?

45. I traveled to an area affected by COVID-19 and have been sick ever since I got back. Should I be tested for the Coronavirus?

Call your healthcare professional if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. Your healthcare professional will work with your local health department to assess your exposure risk and determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

46. I traveled to an area not affected by COVID-19 and have been sick ever since I got back. Should I be tested for the Coronavirus?

There are many causes of respiratory illness. If you are sick, it is important that you speak with your healthcare provider. They can evaluate your illness and determine if you might need to be tested for the virus that causes COVID-19.

47. After returning from China / Iran, when can an employee return to work?

Currently, anyone who enters the United States after being in China / Iran during the past 14 days will have some level of restrictions on their movements.

- Travelers from Hubei Province will be quarantined and actively monitored in a location to be determined by public health authorities for up to 14 days.
- Travelers from other parts of China and Iran who do not have any symptoms are being asked to monitor their health and practice social distancing for 14 days.

Social distancing means remaining out of:

- Public places where close contact with others may occur (such as shopping centers, movie theaters, stadiums).
- Workplaces (unless the person works in an office space that allows distancing from others).
- Schools and other classroom settings.

- Local public transportation (such as on a bus, subway, taxi, ride share, plane, ship)

These restrictions are to be in effect for 14 days from the time the person was possibly exposed.

48. I have roommates that are flying to country X for spring break, and I wanted to report them. Where can I report them to?

Not all countries are impacted by travel restrictions related to COVID-19. Travelers returning to the U.S. from areas with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 will be directed to one of 11 US airports and will be screened for fever and symptoms and asked questions about their travel and exposures. Those travelers might have some level of restriction on their movement depending on their health and travel history. VDH is notified of travelers returning from areas considered by the CDC to be at elevated risk for COVID-19 exposure.

49. What are you doing about people returning from overseas and going right back to work?

Travelers returning to the U.S. from areas with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 will be directed to one of 11 US airports and will be screened for fever and symptoms and asked questions about their travel and exposures. Those travelers might have some level of restriction on their movement depending on their health and travel history. VDH is notified of travelers returning from areas considered by the CDC to be at elevated risk for COVID-19 exposure.

Healthy returning travelers from other areas of the world are not subject to the same stringent movement and monitoring restrictions and are allowed to return to work and be around other people. Depending on where the person is returning from, public health might still check in with them to monitor their health.

50. Is it safe to go on a cruise?

Cruises put large numbers of people, often from countries around the world, in frequent and close contact with each other. This can promote the spread of respiratory viruses, such as the virus that causes COVID-19. You may get sick from close contact with an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces.

To reduce spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, CDC recommends that crew members and passengers:

- 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, 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 that contains 60%–95% alcohol.

- Stay in your cabin when you are sick and let the onboard medical center know immediately if you develop a fever (100.4°F/38°C or higher), begin to feel feverish, or have other symptoms (such as cough, runny nose, shortness of breath, or sore throat).

51. What is the risk of getting COVID-19 on an airplane?

Because of how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes, most viruses and other germs do not spread easily on airplanes. Although the risk of infection on an airplane is low, travelers should try to avoid contact with sick passengers and wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol.

52. What happens if there is a sick passenger on a flight?

Under current federal regulations, pilots must report to CDC all illnesses and deaths before arriving in the United States. If a sick traveler is considered to be a public health risk, CDC works with local and state health departments and international public health agencies to contact passengers and crew exposed to that sick traveler—according to CDC disease protocols. Be sure to give the airline your current contact information when booking your ticket.

53. Should I wear a facemask or other protective equipment during travel?

CDC does not recommend travelers wear facemasks to protect themselves from COVID-19. You may choose to wear a mask, but it is more important that you take these steps.

We recommend that everyone follow everyday prevention practices:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- 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 product.
- 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 that contains 60%–95% alcohol.

54. Where can I find up to date travel information related to COVID-19?

Check out the CDC Travel Information website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

You will also find helpful information about international travel at

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/> or type

travel.state.gov in the URL address window. You can search by country for specific information about COVID-19 and other travel issues. May I help you look up your questions on this site?

U.S. Travel

55. Where are the high risk travel areas?

The situation in the U.S. is rapidly evolving. No travel health advisories have been issued from the CDC for areas in the U.S. at this time. Sustained community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring in Washington State. Travelers should practice usual precautions, including:

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
- It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- Pay attention to your health during travel and for 14 days after you leave.

For the most up to date information on COVID-19 in the U.S. visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>

56. My loved one just flew back from X - do they need to be tested or quarantined?

There are no movement restrictions (such as quarantine) for healthy travelers within the U.S. Returning travelers can monitor their health and call their healthcare provider if they become sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. The healthcare provider will work with the local health department to determine if testing for COVID-19 is indicated.

57. My roommate is going to X for Spring Break, do you think he should be traveling now with the coronavirus?

The situation in the U.S. is rapidly evolving. No travel health advisories have been issued from the CDC for areas in the U.S. at this time. Community transmission of COVID-19 is believed to be occurring in Washington, California, and New York.

Travelers should practice usual precautions, including:

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
- It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- Pay attention to your health during travel and for 14 days after you leave.

For the most up to date information on COVID-19 in the U.S. visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>

58. What are you doing about people traveling and going right back to work?

There are no movement restrictions for healthy travelers within the U.S; they are allowed to return to work and be around other people. Anyone who is sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, should call their healthcare provider. The healthcare provider will work with the local health department to determine if testing for COVID-19 is indicated.

59. I traveled to an area affected by COVID-19 and have been sick ever since I got back. Should I be tested for the Coronavirus?

Call your healthcare professional if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. Your healthcare professional will work with your local health department to assess your exposure risk and determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

60. I traveled to an area not affected by COVID-19 and have been sick ever since I got back. Should I be tested for the Coronavirus?

There are many causes of respiratory illness. If you are sick, it is important that you speak with your healthcare provider. They can evaluate your illness and determine if you might need to be tested for the virus that causes COVID-19.

61. Should I wear a facemask or other protective equipment during travel?

CDC does not recommend travelers wear facemasks to protect themselves from COVID-19. You may choose to wear a mask, but it is more important that you take these steps.

We recommend that everyone follow everyday prevention practices:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- 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 product.
- 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 that contains 60%–95% alcohol.

62. Where can I find up to date travel information related to COVID-19?

Check out the CDC Travel Information website:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

Business and Workplace

63. How can my business prevent COVID-19 spread?

Businesses can actively encourage sick employees to stay home by ensuring that your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance.

Businesses should also perform routine cleaning for all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. All employers can visit CDC guidance to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace at the following site:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html> and
<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>

VDH has additional guidance for businesses available at:

http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/13/2020/03/VDH-Business-Guidance_03.08.20-1.pdf

This guidance addresses planning, response when COVID-19 is detected in your community, and follow up. Issues to consider include environmental cleaning, encouraging sick employees to stay home or telework and coverage for essential functions. Would you like for me to walk you through the guidance or send it to you?

64. I run a food establishment – what should I know about COVID-19?

If you work in a restaurant or other food establishment, VDH has guidance at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/13/2020/03/VDH-Interim-Guidance-COVID-19.pdf>. That guidance states there is no evidence that COVID-19 is spread through food or food shipped from affected regions. Would you like for me to walk you through the guidance or send it to you?

65. After returning from China / Iran, when can an employee return to work?

Currently, anyone who enters the United States after being in China / Iran during the past 14 days will have some level of restrictions on their movements.

- Travelers from Hubei Province will be quarantined and actively monitored in a location to be determined by public health authorities for up to 14 days.
- Travelers from other parts of China and Iran who do not have any symptoms are being asked to monitor their health and practice social distancing for 14 days.

Social distancing means remaining out of:

- Public places where close contact with others may occur (such as shopping centers, movie theaters, stadiums).
- Workplaces (unless the person works in an office space that allows distancing from others).
- Schools and other classroom settings.
- Local public transportation (such as on a bus, subway, taxi, ride share, plane, ship)

These restrictions are to be in effect for 14 days from the time the person was possibly exposed.

66. A worker in my office arrived from Level 2 country: Italy, South Korea recently. Should he/she be allowed to go to work?

The Virginia Department of Health recommends the following to travelers returning from Level 2 countries like Italy and Korea:

- Monitor your health and limit your interactions with others for the 14 days from the time you left the country identified by CDC as a Level 2 Travel Health Notice country.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, or shortness of breath. If you develop fever, cough, or shortness of breath, call 877-ASK-VDH3 immediately to speak with a public health official. If you have additional questions about staying home or monitoring your health, please contact your local health department.

67. My coworker/friend just flew back from X and I don't want him/her in my office, what should I do?

You can read more about VDH's recommendations for travelers returning from destinations with CDC issued travel health alerts at

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>

I'd be glad to walk you through these recommendations. (*See also International Travel FAQs for VDH recommendations for travelers returning from countries of concern*).

Where did your friend/coworker return from? You can also speak with your supervisor or human resources department about your concerns and related workplace policies.

68. Do you have an email list that our organization can get on to get alerts concerning the Coronavirus to help inform our emergency plan?

Not at this time. Feel free to check our website (<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>), which is updated daily, or call VDH back at 877-ASK-VDH3 if you have additional questions.

69. Where should I direct my staff if they experience any Coronavirus symptoms?

Tell me a little more about your workplace, so I can give you the best information. Are you in a healthcare setting, long-term care facility, or nursing home? **IF YES, PUT THE CALLER IN CONTACT WITH THEIR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT.**

If employees experience fever, cough, or shortness of breath, they should call their healthcare provider. They can evaluate your illness and determine if you might need to be tested for the virus that causes COVID-19.

70. Also, we would welcome any booklets or information that VDH has to assist in developing an organizational contingency plan.

We have posted available print resources and highlights at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>. Would you like for me to walk you through these materials or send any to you?

71. Is there any reporting structure where we are supposed to report employees that test positive for the Coronavirus if they deal with the public?

Physicians and medical facilities are required to report any unusual occurrence of diseases of public health concern, including COVID-19, to their local health department. Employers other than physicians and medical facilities are not required to report.

Event Planning

72. I am planning a large event. Do you have any information I can post around my venue and any guidance for the situation with the Coronavirus?

VDH has issued guidance on mass gatherings or other large community events at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/13/2020/03/VDH-Mass-Gatherings-Guidance-03.09.20.pdf>

The guidance defines mass gatherings as planned or spontaneous events with a large number of people in attendance that could strain the planning and response resources of the community hosting the event, such as concerts, festivals, conferences, worship services, and sporting events. As the COVID-19 outbreak evolves, the Virginia Department of Health strongly encourages event organizers and staff to prepare for the possibility of outbreaks in their communities. Creating an emergency plan for mass gatherings and large community events can help protect you and the health of your event participants and local community. Would you like for me to walk you through the guidance or send it to you?

VDH also has information you can print and post to remind participants of ways they can prevent the spread of germs like COVID-19 available at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>

Would you like for me to send it to you?

73. I plan to attend a very large event in X. Is X planning on shutting any events down due to Coronavirus?

Please contact the event organizers to determine whether the event is cancelled.

74. Are there any cases of COVID-19 in the part of Virginia where I am planning my event?

You will find the most recent information about where cases in Virginia are located at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>. Would you like for me to look that information up for you and walk you through it?

Schools (K-12)

75. A classmate in my child's school arrived from X recently. Should he/she be allowed to go to school?

Students or teachers who traveled should follow the same guidance as any other traveler. (*See International Travel FAQs and Domestic Travel FAQs for additional information*)

Nursing Homes and Long-Term Care Facilities

76. My loved one is in a nursing home/long-term care facility. How can I prevent them from getting COVID-19?

1- If you are visiting your loved one in a nursing home, make sure you are not sick. If you are sick, postpone your visit until you can see your healthcare provider and get the proper management.

2- If you are not sick and visiting your relative in a nursing home, follow the proper hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene practices during your visit. Observe posted signs for any special instructions.

3- If your loved one is sick, especially with respiratory symptoms, inform the healthcare provider at the nursing home for further guidance.

4- Visitors should not visit more than one resident. Visits should be in the resident's room, rather than in common areas.

77. Are patients in long-term care facilities at risk for serious illness from COVID-19?

Based upon available data, older adults and those with underlying chronic medical conditions or immunocompromised states may be at greater risk for severe illness and outcomes from COVID-19.

78. What should a long-term care facility do if they notice a cluster of respiratory illness among residents?

Immediately contact your local public health department for assistance and further guidance. Per the Virginia disease reporting regulations, all suspected clusters or outbreaks of any illness should be immediately reported to the local health department by the most rapid means available.

79. Will my loved one have to go to the hospital if they get COVID-19?

Depending on the severity of the illness and capabilities at the facility, your loved one may be able to stay in their current location to receive supportive care. More serious illness may require admission to the local hospital for treatment.

Community Questions and Concerns

80. How can my community prevent COVID-19 spread?

Each member of the community plays an important role in preventing the community spread of COVID-19 by following these precautions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- 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 product.
- 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 that contains 60%–95% alcohol.

81. What is community spread?

Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

82. What is social distancing?

Social distancing means remaining out of:

- Public places where close contact with others may occur (such as shopping centers, movie theaters, stadiums).
- Workplaces (unless the person works in an office space that allows distancing from others).
- Schools and other classroom settings.

- Local public transportation (such as on a bus, subway, taxi, ride share, plane, ship)

These restrictions are to be in effect for 14 days from the time the person was possibly exposed.

83. If there are any warnings/plans that have been created that affect our region, would you please share them with us?

VDH is using its website at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/> to provide the most accurate information about cases and what region of the state they are located in. Would you like for me to look up that information and walk you through it? VDH has no warnings or plans for any regions at this time. VDH also hosts a biweekly tele-press conference to keep the media up to date with accurate information.

84. Should I be worried about people touching items at grocery stores?

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

86. I'm worried because supplies of hand sanitizer are low / over-priced. How can I protect myself?

The best way to protect yourself is to wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. Do this often throughout the day, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

Additionally:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Put distance (>6 feet) between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

87. How can people help stop stigma associated with COVID-19?

People can fight stigma and help, not hurt, others by providing social support. Counter stigma by learning and sharing facts. Communicating the facts that viruses do not target specific racial or ethnic groups and how COVID-19 actually spreads can help stop stigma.

88. Where can I get more information about protecting myself and my community?

Check out the following website(s):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#symptoms>

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>

Isolation / Quarantine / Movement Restrictions / Public Health Monitoring

89. What is isolation?

Isolation is the separation of sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.

90. What is quarantine?

Quarantine is the separation of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. This often involves some level of restriction on the movement of those people.

91. Why are some people being asked to restrict their movements?

People might be asked to restrict their movements if public health has reason to believe they might have been exposed to COVID-19. This is to help prevent the spread of disease in a community.

92. Why are people entering the US from X country being asked to restrict their movements?

Public health is monitoring the health of travelers who have been in countries where community transmission of COVID-19 is known to be widespread. These travelers might have been exposed to COVID-19, so we want to monitor their health closely and quickly provide them with care if they become sick.

93. I recently returned from X and was asked to limit my movements and stay home. What are the conditions of these movement restrictions?

It depends on where you traveled and other individual circumstances. Did your local health department provide you instructions or an agreement? If yes, let's review them together.

See International Travel FAQs and Domestic Travel FAQs for additional information.

94. How do I monitor myself for symptoms of COVID-19?

If you have traveled to an area where COVID-19 is spreading in the community or if you have been in close contact with a person with COVID-19, you should take your temperature twice daily and remain alert for signs of illness, including fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. When taking your temperature, it is important to not eat, drink, or exercise for at least 30 minutes.

Notify the health department and call your healthcare provider if you develop a fever (or feel feverish), cough, or have difficulty breathing. Do you need assistance contacting your local health department?

95. What are the enforcement powers in place if a person violates quarantine restrictions, and is there a number to report the violation?

If a person does not comply with voluntary quarantine, the VDH may issue a quarantine order that legally requires the person to comply with quarantine restrictions. Law enforcement can become involved, if needed, to ensure compliance.

96. I've been diagnosed with COVID-19. How long do I need to be isolated?

If a patient tested positive for COVID-19 and is isolating at home, the person should remain under home isolation precautions for 7 days OR until 72 hours after fever is gone and symptoms get better, whichever is longer.

97. Are neighbors notified of the presence of such a person of risk?

No, neighbors are not notified. VDH keeps protected health information private in order to protect each person's confidentiality.

Disease Prevention

98. How can I avoid getting COVID-19?

We recommend that everyone follow everyday prevention practices:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- 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 product.
- 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 that contains 60%–95% alcohol.

99. Should I wear a mask when I go out in public or when I travel?

It is not recommended that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of disease to others. The use of facemasks is crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (e.g. at home or in a healthcare facility).

100. When will a vaccine be available?

It typically takes several months to years to develop a safe and effective vaccine. Even with the urgency of the COVID-19 outbreak, it is unlikely a safe and effective vaccine will be developed and available before 2021.

101. I ordered a coat from Amazon and I did not know until it shipped that it was coming directly from China / or other location. I tried unsuccessfully to have the shipment stopped. What do I do?

There is still a lot that is unknown about the newly emerged COVID-19 and how it spreads. In general, because of poor survivability of other coronaviruses, such as SARS and MERS, on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures. Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets. Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with imported goods and there have not been any cases of COVID-19 in the United States associated with imported goods.

Disease Treatment

102. What is the treatment for COVID-19 and other coronaviruses?

There is no specific treatment for coronavirus infections. Treatment consists of supportive care and relief of symptoms. Please consult a licensed physician or other healthcare provider for additional recommendations about disease treatment.

103. I heard about antiviral medications available for COVID-19.

Some medications are being evaluated for potential use. At this time, there are no FDA-approved medications available to treat COVID-19. Please consult a licensed physician or other healthcare provider for additional recommendations about disease treatment.

104. Is drinking bleach an effective treatment?

No, it is not, and neither is any other heavy duty household cleaner. Drinking bleach or other disinfectants is very dangerous and can cause death. Please consult a licensed physician or other healthcare provider for treatment recommendations.

Animals and COVID-19

105. Should I be concerned about pets or other animals? Can I get COVID-19 from an animal?

While this virus seems to have emerged from an animal source, it is now spreading from person-to-person in China. There is no reason to think that any animals, including pets, in the United States might be a source of infection with this new coronavirus. To date, CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19. At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread COVID-19. However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it's always a good idea to wash your hands after being around animals.

106. Should I avoid pets or other animals while I am sick with COVID-19?

You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. If you are sick with COVID-19, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask.

Special Populations: Immunocompromised or Underlying Health Conditions

107. What should people with compromised immune systems do about protecting themselves? Besides staying home, would it not be recommended that face masks be warranted?

People with weakened immune systems should take the following precautions:

- Stock up on supplies, such as medications.
- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others.
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.
- Avoid crowds as much as possible.
- Avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel.
- During a COVID-19 outbreak in your community, stay home as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed.

Pregnancy and Infants

108. Are pregnant women more susceptible to infection, or at increased risk for severe illness, morbidity, or mortality with COVID-19, compared with the general public?

We do not have information from published scientific reports about susceptibility of pregnant women to COVID-19. Pregnant women experience immunologic and physiologic changes which might make them more susceptible to viral respiratory infections in general, including COVID-19.

Pregnant women also might be at risk for severe illness compared to the general population as observed in cases of other related coronavirus infections [including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)] and other viral respiratory infections, such as influenza.

Pregnant women should engage in usual preventive actions to avoid infection like washing hands often and avoiding people who are sick.

109. Are pregnant women with COVID-19 at increased risk for adverse pregnancy outcomes?

We do not have information on adverse pregnancy outcomes in pregnant women with COVID-19. Pregnancy loss, including miscarriage and stillbirth, has been observed in cases of infection with other related coronaviruses [SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV] during pregnancy. High fevers during the first trimester of pregnancy can increase the risk of certain birth defects.

110. Are pregnant healthcare personnel at increased risk for adverse outcomes if they care for patients with COVID-19?

Pregnant healthcare personnel (HCP) should follow risk assessment and infection control guidelines for HCP exposed to patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Adherence to recommended infection prevention and control practices is an important part of protecting all HCP in healthcare settings.

Information on COVID-19 in pregnancy is very limited; facilities may want to consider limiting exposure of pregnant HCP to patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, especially during higher risk procedures (e.g., aerosol-generating procedures) if feasible based on staffing availability.

111. Can pregnant women with COVID-19 pass the virus to their fetus or newborn?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly by close contact with an infected person through respiratory droplets. Whether a pregnant woman with COVID-19

can transmit the virus to her fetus or neonate by other routes before, during, or after delivery, is still unknown.

In limited recent case series of infants born to mothers with COVID-19 published in the peer-reviewed literature, none of the infants have tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19. Additionally, virus was not detected in samples of amniotic fluid or breastmilk.

Limited information is available about vertical transmission for other coronaviruses (MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV) but vertical transmission has not been reported for these infections.

112. Are infants born to mothers with COVID-19 during pregnancy at increased risk for adverse outcomes?

Based on limited reports, adverse infant outcomes (e.g., preterm birth) have been reported among infants born to mothers positive for COVID-19 during pregnancy. However, it is not clear that these outcomes were related to maternal infection, and at this time the risk of adverse infant outcomes is not known.

Given the limited data available related to COVID-19 during pregnancy, knowledge of adverse outcomes from other respiratory viral infections may provide some information. For example, other respiratory viral infections during pregnancy, such as influenza, have been associated with adverse neonatal outcomes, including low birth weight and preterm birth. Additionally, having a cold or influenza with high fever early in pregnancy may increase the risk of certain birth defects. Infants have been born preterm and/or small for gestational age to mothers with other coronavirus infections, SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, during pregnancy.

113. Is there a risk that COVID-19 in a pregnant woman or neonate could have long-term effects on infant health and development that may require clinical support beyond infancy?

At this time, there is no information on long-term health effects on infants either with COVID-19, or those exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 in utero. In general, prematurity and low birth weight are associated with adverse long-term health effects.

114. Is maternal illness with COVID-19 during lactation associated with potential risk to a breastfeeding infant?

Human-to-human transmission by close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 has been reported and is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when a person with infection coughs or sneezes. No information is available on the transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 through breast milk (i.e., whether infectious virus is present in the breast milk of an infected woman).

115. Where can I find more information on COVID-19 and specific to pregnant women and children?

For current information and additional reading, you can check out the CDC's website:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-faq.html

References and Resources

www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/docs/faqs_monitoring.pdf

www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases. Frequently Asked Questions and Answers: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Pregnancy. Accessed March 7, 2020.

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-faq.html

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<https://www.ahip.org/health-insurance-providers-respond-to-coronavirus-covid-19/>