# COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

Public Health
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Shelby County Health Department

## What is COVID-19?

Novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, is a virus strain that has only spread in people since December 2019. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

## How does COVID-19 spread?

Health experts are still learning the details about how this new coronavirus spreads. Other coronaviruses spread from an infected person to others through:

- the air by coughing and sneezing
- close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes
- in rare cases, contact with feces

## How severe is COVID-19?

Experts are still learning about the range of illness from this new coronavirus. Reported cases have ranged from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires hospitalization. So far, deaths have been reported mainly in older adults who had other health conditions.

## What are the symptoms?

People who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus:

**Fever**

**Cough**

**Difficulty breathing**

# Who is at risk for COVID-19?

Currently the risk to the general public in the United States is thought to be low. At this time, there are a only a small number of individual cases in the U.S. and limited person-to-person spread of the virus in some communities. To minimize the risk of spread, health officials are working with healthcare providers to promptly identify and evaluate any suspected cases.

Travelers to and from certain areas of the world may be at increased risk. See wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel for the latest travel guidance from the CDC.

# How can I prevent infection with COVID-19?

If you are traveling overseas follow the CDC's travel guidance:  wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel.

Right now, COVID-19 has not been spreading widely in the United States, so there are no additional precautions recommended for the general public. Steps you can take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent coronavirus infection:

- wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others
- cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing

Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent COVID-19 infections.

# How is COVID-19 treated?

There are no medications specifically approved for coronavirus infection. Most people with mild illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. However, some cases develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.

**For more information, go to:**
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
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