

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. It is caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. This virus was first identified in 2019 in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. It is different from any other coronaviruses that have been found in people before.

What are the symptoms and complications of COVID-19?

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported, ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may include:

- Fever or chills.
- Cough.
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- Fatigue.
- Muscle pain or body aches.
- Headache.
- Sore throat.
- New loss of taste or smell.
- Congestion or runny nose.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Diarrhea.

Complications of COVID-19 may include respiratory failure, shock, or multiorgan system dysfunction.

How does the virus spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads easily and sustainably between people, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, or breathes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. COVID-19 can sometimes be spread by airborne transmission (when small droplets are able to infect people who are further than 6 feet away from the infected person or after that person has left the space), however, spread is more likely between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not displaying symptoms. Less commonly, a person can get COVID-19 by touching a contaminated surface or object and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes (this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads).

Prevention and Control

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to COVID-19. The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, or breathes. These droplets can land in the mouths and noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). To prevent illness:

- Get vaccinated and stay [up to date](#) with your vaccines.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, stay at home as much as possible, and put distance between yourself and other people.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a well-fitting face mask when around others if COVID-19 Community Levels are high in your area or as advised by your healthcare provider if you are at high-risk for severe illness.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

- [Wash hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Is there a vaccine?

Currently, three vaccines are authorized and recommended to prevent COVID-19:

- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#).
- [Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#).
- [Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine](#).

What are the treatments?

Several [types of treatments](#) (including antiviral medications and monoclonal antibodies) are available, particularly for [people who are more likely to become severely ill from COVID-19](#). Early effective management of any disease can help prevent progression to more serious illness, especially for patients at high risk of disease progression and severe illness. If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you have COVID-19, please call your healthcare provider to discuss what treatment options might be recommended for you.

What do I do if I am sick with COVID-19 and have pets?

If you are sick with COVID-19 (either suspected or confirmed by a test), you should restrict contact with your pets and other animals, just like you would with people.

- Have another member of your household care for your pets while you are sick, if possible.
- Avoid contact with your pet including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food or bedding.
- If you must care for your pet or be around other animals while you are sick, wear a face mask and wash your hands before and after you interact with them.

If you are sick with COVID-19 and your pet becomes sick, do not take your pet to the veterinary clinic yourself. Call your veterinarian and let them know you have been sick with COVID-19. Some veterinarians may offer telemedicine consultations or other plans for seeing sick pets. Your veterinarian can evaluate your pet and determine the next steps for your pet's treatment and care. Routine testing of animals is not recommended at this time.

What can I do to protect my pet and my family from COVID-19?

Until we learn more about how this virus affects animals, treat pets as you would other human family members to protect them from a possible infection.

- Do not let pets interact with people or other animals outside the household.
- Keep cats indoors when possible to prevent them from interacting with other animals or people.
- Walk dogs on a leash, maintaining at least 6 feet (2 meters) from other people and animals.
- Avoid dog parks or public places where a large number of people and dogs gather.

Can I get COVID-19 from my pets or other animals?

Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low. See [CDC's animals and COVID-19](#) website for more information about pets and COVID-19. However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it's always good to practice [healthy habits](#) around pets and other animals, such as washing your hands and maintaining good hygiene. For more information on the many

benefits of pet ownership, as well as staying safe and healthy around animals including pets, livestock, and wildlife, visit [CDC's Healthy Pets, Healthy People](#) website.

Can animals carry the virus that causes COVID-19 on their skin or fur?

Although we know certain bacteria and fungi can be carried on fur and hair, there is no evidence that viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19, can spread to people from the skin, fur, or hair of pets. However, because animals can sometimes carry other germs that can make people sick, it's always a good idea to practice [healthy habits](#) around pets and other animals, including washing hands before and after interacting with them.

Can I use hand sanitizer on pets?

Do not wipe or bathe your pet with chemical disinfectants, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or other products, such as hand sanitizer, counter-cleaning wipes, or other industrial or surface cleaners. If you have questions about appropriate products for bathing or cleaning your pet, talk to your veterinarian. If your pet gets hand sanitizer on their skin or fur, rinse or wipe down your pet with water immediately. If your pet ingests hand sanitizer (such as by chewing the bottle) or is showing signs of illness after use, contact your veterinarian or pet poison control immediately.

For more information, please visit these websites:

- ODH COVID-19: www.coronavirus.ohio.gov
- CDC COVID-19: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus
- CDC Healthy Pets, Healthy People COVID-19: www.cdc.gov/healthypets/covid-19