COVID-19

COVID-19, also known as coronavirus disease or novel coronavirus, is caused by a type of virus that causes respiratory illness. This may lead to inflammation and the buildup of mucus and fluids in the airway of the lungs (*pneumonia*). There are many different coronaviruses. Most of these viruses only affect animals, but sometimes these viruses can change and infect people.

What are the causes?

This illness is caused by a virus. You may catch the virus by:

- Breathing in droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze.
- Touching something, like a table or a doorknob, that was exposed to the virus (*contaminated*) and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Being around animals that carry the virus, or eating uncooked or undercooked meat or animal products that contain the virus.

What increases the risk?

You are more likely to develop this condition if you:

- Live in or travel to an area with a COVID-19 outbreak.
- Come in contact with a sick person who recently traveled to an area with a COVID-19 outbreak.
- Provide care for or live with a person who is infected with COVID-19.

What are the signs or symptoms?

COVID-19 causes respiratory illness that can lead to pneumonia. Symptoms of pneumonia may include:

- A fever.
- A cough.
- Difficulty breathing.

How is this diagnosed?

This condition may be diagnosed based on:

- Your signs and symptoms, especially if:
  - You live in an area with a COVID-19 outbreak.
  - You recently traveled to or from an area where the virus is common.
  - You provide care for or live with a person who was diagnosed with COVID-19.
- A physical exam.
- Lab tests, which may include:
  - A nasal swab to take a sample of fluid from your nose.
  - A throat swab to take a sample of fluid from your throat.
  - A sample of mucus from your lungs (*sputum*).
  - Blood tests.

How is this treated?

There is no medicine to treat COVID-19. Your health care provider will talk with you about ways to treat your symptoms. This may include rest, fluids, and over-the-counter medicines.

Follow these instructions at home:

Lifestyle

- Use a cool-mist humidifier to add moisture to the air. This can help you breathe more easily.
- **Do not** use any products that contain nicotine or tobacco, such as cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and chewing tobacco. If you need help quitting, ask your health care provider.
- Rest at home as told by your health care provider.
- Return to your normal activities as told by your health care provider. Ask your health care provider what activities are safe for you.

General instructions

- Take over-the-counter and prescription medicines only as told by your health care provider.
- Drink enough fluid to keep your urine pale yellow.
- Keep all follow-up visits as told by your health care provider. This is important.

How is this prevented?

There is no vaccine to help prevent COVID-19 infection. However, there are steps you can take to protect yourself and others from this virus.

To protect yourself:

- **Do not** travel to areas where COVID-19 is a risk. The areas where the coronavirus is reported change often. To identify high-risk areas, check the CDC travel website: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices
- If you live in, or must travel to, an area where the coronavirus is a risk, take precautions to avoid infection.
    - Stay away from people who are sick.
    - Stay away from places where there are animals that may carry the virus. This includes places where animals and animal products are sold. Note that both living and dead animals can carry the virus.
    - **Do not** eat meat or fish in areas of a coronavirus outbreak. If you must eat fish or meat, make sure that it is cooked very well.
    - Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
    - Avoid touching your mouth, face, eyes, or nose.

To protect others:

If you have symptoms, take steps to prevent the virus from spreading to others.

- If you think you have a coronavirus infection, contact your health care provider right away. Tell your health care team that you think you may have a COVID-19 infection.
- Stay home. Leave your house only to seek medical care.
- **Do not** travel while you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Stay away from other members of your household. If possible, stay in your own room, separate from others. Use a different bathroom.

- Make sure that all people in your household wash their hands well and often.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve or elbow. **Do not** cough or sneeze into your hand or into the air.
- Wear a face mask.

Where to find more information

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
- World Health Organization: www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus

Contact a health care provider if:

- You have traveled to an area where COVID-19 is a risk and you have symptoms of the infection.
- You have contact with someone who has traveled to an area where COVID-19 is a risk and you have symptoms of the infection.

Get help right away if:

- You have trouble breathing.
- You have chest pain.

Summary

- COVID-19 is caused by a type of virus that causes respiratory illness. This may lead to inflammation and the buildup of mucus and fluids in the airway of the lungs (*pneumonia*).
- You are more likely to develop this condition if you live in or travel to an area with a COVID-19 outbreak.
- There is no medicine to treat COVID-19. Your health care provider will talk with you about ways to treat your symptoms.
- Take steps to protect yourself and others from infection. Wash your hands often. Stay away from other people who are sick and wear a mask if you are sick.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.