



Coronavirus FAQ

What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others circulating among animals, including camels, cats and bats.

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people and can spread from person-to-person. This virus was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

What are symptoms of coronavirus?

Symptoms of the COVID-19 can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying.

How can the coronavirus spread?

Human coronaviruses spread just like the flu or a cold:

- Through the air by coughing or sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it
- Occasionally, fecal contamination





How can I protect myself?

Prevention

- Cover coughs or sneezes with your elbow. **Do not use your hands!**
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Clean surfaces frequently, including countertops, light switches, cell phones, remotes, and other frequently touched items.
- Contain: if you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

In addition, it is recommended that Pennsylvanians take time to prepare now. [View the PA Emergency Preparedness Guide.](#)

Should I wear a mask or respirator in public?

The CDC does not recommend wearing masks or respirators outside of workplaces settings (in the community). A respirator is a personal protective device that is worn on the face or head and covers at least the nose and mouth. Most often, spread of respiratory viruses from person-to-person happens among close contacts (within 6 feet). It is important that these devices are readily available to health care workers and others who need them.

Should I be 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 state's public health department and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

Should events be cancelled?

- At this time, the Pennsylvania Department of Health is not recommending cancellation of mass gatherings, although this is an option that could be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- This recommendation is based on the lack of community spread in Pennsylvania and the surrounding states, at this time.
- Mass gathering guidance from CDC is expected to be released. We will share this guidance once we receive it.





More information is available at

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

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

