



Coronavirus COVID-19

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Information Last Updated: February 27, 2020

- Coronaviruses are the cause of 5 to 10 percent of community-acquired upper respiratory tract infections in adults, occurring sporadically or in outbreaks of variable size, and probably also play a role in severe respiratory infections in both children and adults, particularly adults with underlying pulmonary disease and older adults.
- Community-acquired coronaviruses are ubiquitous; wherever investigators have looked, they have been detected. In temperate climates, coronavirus respiratory infections occur primarily in the winter, although smaller peaks are sometimes seen in the fall or spring, and infections can occur at any time of the year.
- There is currently no treatment recommended for coronavirus infections except for supportive care as needed.
- In late 2019, a novel coronavirus was identified as the cause of a cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, a city in China. It subsequently spread throughout China and elsewhere, becoming a global health emergency. In February 2020, the World Health Organization designated the disease COVID-19, which stands for coronavirus disease 2019.
- Since the first reports of COVID-19, infection has spread to include more than 70,000 cases in China and scattered but increasing cases worldwide, prompting the WHO to declare a public health emergency in late January 2020.
- The possibility of COVID-19 should be considered primarily in patients with fever and/or lower respiratory tract symptoms who reside in or have recently (within the prior 14 days) traveled to China or who have had recent (within the prior 14 days) close contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19.
- Upon suspicion of COVID-19, infection control measures should be implemented and public health officials notified. In health care settings in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends standard, contact, and airborne precautions, as well as eye protection.
- Management consists of supportive care. Home management may be possible for patients with mild illness who can be adequately isolated in the outpatient setting.

Resources

[Center for Disease Control](#)

[World Health Organization](#)

UpToDate, Inc. (subscription based)

WHO Recommendations

Community setting

Individuals without respiratory symptoms should:

- avoid agglomerations and frequency of closed crowded spaces
- maintain distance of at least 1 meter from any individual with respiratory symptoms (e.g., coughing, sneezing)
- perform hand hygiene frequently, using alcohol-based hand rub if hands are not visibly soiled or soap and water when hands are visibly soiled
- if coughing or sneezing cover nose and mouth with flexed elbow or paper tissue, dispose of tissue immediately after use and perform hand hygiene
- refrain from touching mouth and nose
- a medical mask is not required, as no evidence is available on its usefulness to protect non-sick persons. However, masks might be worn in some countries according to local cultural habits. If masks are used, best practices should be followed on how to wear, remove, and dispose of them and on hand hygiene action after removal (see below advice regarding appropriate mask management).

Individuals with respiratory symptoms should:

- wear a medical mask and seek medical care if experiencing fever, cough and difficulty breathing, as soon as possible or in accordance with local protocols
- follow the below advice regarding appropriate mask management.

Masks management

If medical masks are worn, appropriate use and disposal is essential to ensure they are effective and to avoid any increase in risk of transmission associated with the incorrect use and disposal of masks. The following information on correct use of medical masks derives from the practices in health-care settings :

- place mask carefully to cover mouth and nose and tie securely to minimize any gaps between the face and the mask
- while in use, avoid touching the mask
- remove the mask by using appropriate technique (i.e. do not touch the front but remove the lace from behind)
- after removal or whenever you inadvertently touch a used mask, clean hands by using an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water if visibly soiled
- replace masks with a new clean, dry mask as soon as they become damp/humid
- do not re-use single-use masks
- discard single-use masks after each use and dispose of them immediately upon removal.

*Cloth (e.g. cotton or gauze) masks are not recommended under any circumstance.