

**inspired**

**Guide To  
Coronavirus**

**January 2020**

# Coronavirus

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which include viruses that cause the common cold and Severe Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). It is from a family of viruses that originate in animals before making the jump to humans. Seven, including the new virus, have been found in humans, with four causing only mild, common-cold like symptoms.

## **What are the symptoms of the new coronavirus?**

According to the WHO, the new coronavirus causes a fever, fatigue, sore throat and dry cough in the early stages of the disease. As the illness progresses, patients may experience difficulty breathing. But these symptoms – similar to many other respiratory diseases – are what make it so difficult to control. The virus was initially described by Chinese authorities as a new strain of pneumonia, but was later confirmed to be a novel coronavirus.

## **How are coronaviruses transmitted?**

Like other coronaviruses – such as the common cold – the virus is spread via droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. It can also be spread when someone touches a contaminated surface such as a door handle. As well as close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands, touching an object and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands. Coronaviruses are most commonly spread from an infected person to others through the air or close contact. Hospitals are also key locations for "super spreading" events - when a single patient infects many people.

## **Can the new coronavirus be treated?**

There are no specific treatments for coronaviruses – just as there is no treatment for the common cold.

## **What can you do to limit the risk of catching the new coronavirus?**

Anyone travelling to China and worried about catching the virus needs to take the basic hygiene precautions. Individuals should seek medical attention if they develop respiratory symptoms within 14 days of visiting Wuhan, either in China or on their return to their respective schools.

## **What advice has governments issued?**

The risk to most countries is currently low. Chinese authorities have banned travel from three cities at the centre of the outbreak, with Wuhan placed in lockdown in an attempt to quarantine the deadly virus. However, the advice is constantly under review.

Travellers arriving on flights at airports across the world from Wuhan will be separated from other passengers and Public Health Agencies have announced that they will have enhanced monitoring of direct flights and health workers on site to greet incoming flights from Wuhan.

## **Have international travel warnings been issued?**

Government Agencies are saying that there is now a "moderate" chance the virus could reach other countries. But the risk of international transmission remains highest in Asia, where cases have already crossed borders. Tighter screening measures have been introduced at several airports across the globe. But screening cannot pick up everyone as the incubation period for contracting the virus and the onset of symptoms is between six to 10 days.

## **Are certain groups more at risk?**

At least two of the deaths have been in people with underlying conditions and older people seem to be more vulnerable to the most severe form of the disease. But information filtering out of China and other countries suggests that people of all ages are at risk of contracting the disease.

## **What is the difference between a coronavirus and a flu virus?**

Coronaviruses and flu viruses might cause similar symptoms but genetically they are very different. Flu viruses incubate very rapidly - you tend to get symptoms two to three days after being infected, but coronaviruses take much longer.

## **How to stay safe**

There are currently no vaccines to protect against coronavirus infection, but there are ways to help reduce your risk of contracting it.

### **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advise how you can protect yourself:**

- washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who are sick
- If you are experiencing cold-like symptoms, you can help reduce the risk of spreading it by staying at home while you are ill and avoiding close contact with others.
- You should cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw this away before washing your hands. It is also recommended to clean and disinfect objects and surfaces.
- Increase cleaning and hygiene in common contact areas such as bathrooms, tables, door handles and eating areas.

### **How to protect others:**

If you have cold-like symptoms, you can help protect others by doing the following

- stay home while you are sick
- avoid close contact with others
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands
- clean and disinfect objects and surfaces

# Coronavirus Flow Chart

