

Tips for protecting yourself and your loved ones from the Novel Coronavirus outbreak

What is Novel Coronavirus?

A new flu-like coronavirus has been reported in several cities around the world in recent weeks. The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a virus identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness.

What are the symptoms of coronavirus?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), symptoms of this Coronavirus usually include:

- Feeling tired
- Difficulty breathing
- A high temperature
- A cough and/or sore throat

These symptoms are similar to other respiratory diseases, including flu and the common cold. Symptoms are thought to appear between two and 10 days after contracting the virus. The incubation period during which a person has the disease but is not exhibiting symptoms can be between one day and two weeks. It's possible that the virus can be passed on to others during the incubation period before the person carrying starts to exhibit symptoms.

When to seek medical help

If you have symptoms, consider the following:

- Have you travelled in the last two weeks to a high-risk area?
- Have you been in contact with someone who has?
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends seeking medical care right away if you have symptoms. However, before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.

How to avoid getting the Novel Coronavirus

Hand hygiene is the first and most important line of defence. The WHO recommends:

- washing hands with soap and water
- carrying disposable tissues with you, covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze and disposing of the tissue carefully
- avoiding any unnecessary physical contact with wild animals.

If you've been in contact with wild animals, the WHO recommends you wash your hands immediately.

It's also essential to ensure that your meat is cooked thoroughly before consuming it.

Other tips include:

- Carry a hand sanitizer with you to make frequent cleaning of hands easy
- Always wash your hands before you eat
- Be especially careful in busy airports and other public transport systems about touching things and touching your face
- Do not share snacks from packets or bowls that others are dipping their fingers into
- Regularly clean, not just your hands, but commonly used surfaces and devices you touch or handle

Are some groups of people more at risk than others?

According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this is a rapidly evolving situation and the [risk assessment](#) may change daily. You can follow updates based on your region: Sites that include accurate information include the [World Health Organization](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#).

How to protect your family, especially children

You can significantly lower the risk that children pose of spreading or catching viruses by:

- Explaining to them how germs spread and the importance of good hand and face hygiene
- Keeping household surfaces clean, especially kitchens, bathrooms and door handles
- Using clean cloths to wipe surfaces so you don't transfer germs from one surface to another
- Giving everyone their own towel and making sure they know not to share toothbrushes, etc.
- Keeping your home dry and airy (bugs thrive in musty environments)

What to do if you are stressed because of the news

If you're feeling nervous about the coronavirus, you're not alone. Being concerned and empathetic about this outbreak is normal. However, you may experience feelings of discomfort, impacting concentration, productivity and even disrupting sleep patterns.

What you can do to feel better

- Stick to the facts as communicated by public-health agencies or medical professionals. Instead of reading every article and going to every website, avoiding the web is probably a good idea. If you're concerned, sites that include accurate information include the [World Health Organization](#) and [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#).
- Try to keep it in perspective. Social media can amplify misinformation. Keep in mind that there's a concerted global effort to contain this virus, and the World Health Organization is maintaining a [webpage](#) with answers to common questions.
- And, of course, stay healthy. Washing your hands often, and properly is the single most effective way to stop the spread of disease.

Where can I find out more information?

At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people. The World Health Organization (WHO) is coordinating the international response to the situation and is providing more information [here](#). You can find reliable information through the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#).

For free, confidential EAP assistance, call the number listed on the top of the page.