

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT COVID-19

What is the Coronavirus Disease 2019?

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. This virus was not previously known to cause human illness until the recent outbreak. It is believed that the virus was initially transmitted to humans from a wild animal.

Human-to-human transmission is now the most common route of transmission, and COVID-19 is now classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization, meaning there is transmission in multiple regions around the world. COVID-19 is active in the United States and Houston area.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Many of the symptoms of the virus mimic the common cold and include a wide range of illness from mild symptoms to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms may appear between 24 hours and 14 days after exposure to the virus. Symptoms may be similar to other viral respiratory illnesses and include:



Fever or chills



Cough

**Shortness of breath
or difficulty breathing**



Fatigue

Muscle or body aches

Headache

New loss of taste or smell

Sore throat

Congestion or runny nose

Nausea or vomiting

Diarrhea

Also be mindful that we will be entering flu season and pollen counts are high with seasonal changes, so there are many other causes for upper respiratory symptoms.



How does COVID-19 spread?

As with any viral respiratory illness, COVID-19 can spread from person to person through small respiratory droplets, which are dispersed when a person with the virus coughs or sneezes and are then inhaled by another person or come in contact with their mouth, nose or eyes. These droplets can also land on objects and surfaces around the infected person. Other people then catch the virus by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.



How do I protect myself and my family from getting COVID-19?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent the spread of germs is by wearing a mask, social distancing and practicing proper hand hygiene and cough etiquette. Below are some other tips:

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Practice social distancing, remain at least 6 feet away from individuals who do not live in your home and avoid large gatherings.

Wear a mask or face covering when in public.

Stay home when you are sick.

Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and perform hand hygiene immediately.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

Talk to children about the virus and the importance of practicing good hand hygiene.

Should I be concerned about contracting the Coronavirus?

COVID-19 is actively spreading in our region, and there are a number of community and public health measures that have been implemented to control and slow the spread, including masking orders, school and business closures, and reducing crowding in public areas. While most cases of coronavirus are mild, certain groups are at much higher risk of severe illness. Adults over 50 and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19.