

# **Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

## **What is COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is a novel strain of Coronavirus believed to have originated out of China. The position of the CDC is that the community spread of Coronavirus in the United States is a matter of 'when' and not 'if'.

## **What are the symptoms of Coronavirus infection?**

In most people Coronavirus causes a mild respiratory illness. Early symptoms include low grade fever and dry cough. Sometimes patients may develop fatigue or headaches. Less frequently, diarrhea may also be seen.

## **How dangerous is it?**

The fatality rate of Coronavirus is currently thought to be 2%. The Flu, in comparison, has a fatality rate of 0.1%. But since many people with mild illness may be going undiagnosed, that number may be much lower. Serious illness with Coronavirus is mostly seen in the elderly and those with some other underlying medical condition. Most people fight off Coronavirus well and may only have a mild respiratory illness.

## **Will my child get serious illness with Coronavirus?**

Studies show that children are not very vulnerable to Coronavirus. The number of cases in children and babies is very low. Even when infected, they fight it off well and generally only have a mild illness or likely even no symptoms.

## **How can I prevent Coronavirus infection?**

- The most important step everyone can take is to maintain proper hygiene and follow good handwashing practices.
- Avoid face touching without proper hand washing
- Make sure to wipe down frequently touched surfaces like faucets, kitchen tables and even your phone.

## **Should I use a face mask?**

The determination of the CDC is that the effectiveness of masks is very much limited. Mask use is recommended only if either you or someone in your household has been diagnosed with Coronavirus. Moreover, it is important not to hoard masks, as you may be taking them away from patients and healthcare professionals in desperate need.

## **How can I prepare?**

- Wash hands with soap and water, or hand sanitizer to prevent infection.
- Have a stocked pantry with enough non-perishable food for 1-2 weeks.
- Have a stock of routine medicines like Ibuprofen, Tylenol etc.
- Have a stock of medicine that someone in your household takes routinely (Medication for blood pressure, diabetes, ADHD etc.)
- It may be advisable to have some Pedialyte at home, in case your child experiences signs of dehydration.
- Check the CDC website frequently for any updates/guidelines.
- DO NOT hoard masks.
- DO NOT panic, just prepare.

### **Will schools be shut down?**

It is possible that schools may be closed to prevent the community spread of Coronavirus. In that eventuality, it is important to have a plan. Have a back-up daycare plan ready and try to stay mostly at home if the schools are closed. Ask your employer about the possibility of working from home.

### **Can I travel?**

- When travelling domestically, avoid areas with active outbreak (refer to CDC website for most up to date information)
- Try to avoid crowded areas.
- Try to avoid people you know are sick.
- Make sure to wipe down seats, arm rests and tray tables on flights.
- Wash hands well. Masks are not necessary.
- Everyone should assess their own personal risk level. Older people and people with underlying medical conditions may want to avoid travel.
- Consider whether you can afford to be quarantined for a few weeks while travelling. If not, then consider avoiding travel.
- When travelling internationally, refer to the CDC website to identify the level of travel advisory set on the country you are travelling to.
  - ❖ If level 1 – Practice usual precautions
  - ❖ If level 2 – Older adults and those with chronic conditions avoid travel
  - ❖ If level 3 or 4 – Avoid all non- essential travel

### **Should I avoid getting packages from China?**

There is no evidence of the virus being transmitted on packages due to the poor survivability of the virus on surfaces. Therefore, this is not a cause for concern.

### **When will it end?**

There is a seasonality to many viruses (Like the Flu and Cold viruses) which cause it to peak in winter months and subside in warmer weather. This has to do with how temperature and humidity affect transmission. This may happen with the COVID-19 as well. However, this strain of Coronavirus is too new to adequately predict it's seasonality.

### **When to seek medical attention?**

- High grade fever
- Signs of respiratory distress
- Signs of dehydration

It is not necessary to come in for mild illness. There is currently no test to diagnose Coronavirus at outpatient clinics. Call for any questions or concerns.