Novel Coronavirus

Riverside University HEALTH SYSTEM Public Health

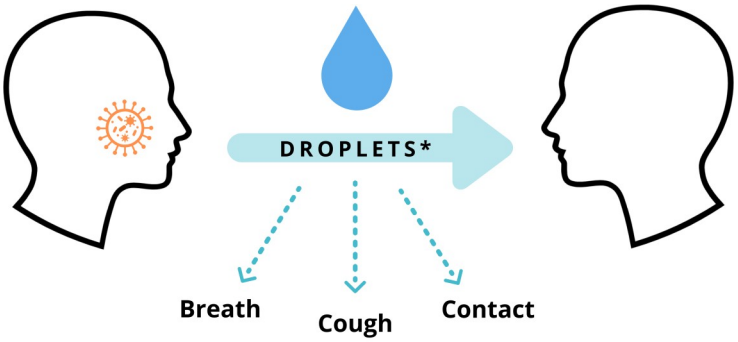
What is novel coronavirus?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus strain spreading from person-to-person in China and other countries, including the United States. In some instances, cases outside of China have been associated with travelers from China. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

How does novel coronavirus spread?

Health experts are still learning the details. Currently, it is thought to spread:

- via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- by touching a surface or object with the virus and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes



** Droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.*

How severe is novel coronavirus?

Most coronavirus illnesses are mild with fever and cough. The vast majority of people with novel coronavirus infection do not require hospital care. A much smaller percentage of people get severely ill with respiratory problems like pneumonia. Elderly people and people with underlying medical conditions are at highest risk.

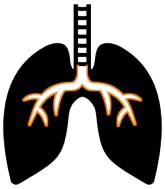
What are the symptoms?

People who have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus:

Fever

Cough

Difficulty breathing



When do I seek medical evaluation and advice?

If you have symptoms like cough, fever, or other respiratory problems, contact your regular doctor first. **Do not go to the emergency room.** Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs.

If you have difficulty breathing, it doesn't mean you have novel coronavirus, but you should call 911.

If you're over 60 and you have underlying conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease, come up with a plan with your doctor to identify your health risks for coronavirus and how to manage symptoms. Contact your doctor right away if you do have symptoms.

How can I protect myself from novel coronavirus?

It is important that everyone take steps to reduce the spread of novel coronavirus, especially to protect those who are more vulnerable. Steps you can take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent coronavirus:

- wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- avoid contact with people who are sick.
- stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.

If you are traveling overseas, follow the CDC's guidance: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel.

Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent novel coronavirus infections.

How is novel coronavirus treated?

There are no medications specifically approved for coronavirus. Most people with mild coronavirus illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. However, some cases develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.

For more information: https://www.rivcoph.org/coronavirus

Updated 3/4/2020

Adapted from King County Public Health