



COVID-19

This information is intended to assist patients in attaining a better understanding of *COVID-19*

What is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that are known to cause mild to severe respiratory infections. COVID-19 is a coronavirus that was first identified in late 2019. In some cases, illness caused by COVID-19 can be mild however, more severe cases can cause pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome, severe influenza-like illness, kidney failure and even death.

Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

Symptoms of COVID-19 range from mild to more severe. Some symptoms are similar to the flu and other common respiratory infections and may include:

- Fever
- New onset cough
- Chills
- Unexplained fatigue
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Stuffy or congested nose
- Lost sense of taste or smell
- Difficulty breathing
- Pink eye
- Digestive issues (nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain), or
- For young children and infants: sluggishness or lack of appetite

Who Can Get COVID-19?

Anyone who has been in close contact with a person with an active COVID-19 infection is at risk of developing COVID-19 themselves. Up to date vaccination against COVID-19 will help to protect you from severe disease and hospitalization due to COVID-19.

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How will my Doctor know that I have COVID-19?

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, your doctor will collect a swab from your nasopharynx (behind your nose and above the back of your throat). The laboratory will test the swab to determine if the virus that causes COVID-19 is present.

How is COVID-19 spread?

The virus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose by small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe. You can be infected by breathing in the virus if you are near someone who has COVID-19, or by touching a contaminated surface and then your eyes, nose or mouth.

How do I prevent the spread of COVID-19 while in the hospital?

If you have COVID-19 you will be moved to a private room until you are no longer infectious. Your activities outside the room may be restricted and you may not be able to have visitors, while you are still infectious. Wash your hands often and wear a mask when outside of your hospital room.

Healthcare staff entering your room will wear a gown, gloves, eye protection and a special mask to prevent them from getting COVID-19. Everyone **MUST** clean their hands before entering and when leaving your room.

What should I do if I still have COVID-19 when I go home?

If you are discharged home from the hospital with an active COVID-19 infection, you should practice 'self-isolation' according to current public health recommendations. Stay home during the recommended isolation period to prevent others from being exposed to COVID-19. If you must leave your home, keep a distance of at least two (2) meters from others and wear a mask at all times.

How do I prevent other members of my household from getting COVID-19?

Members for your household should wash their hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer especially after direct contact. They should be encouraged to wear a well-fitted mask and eye protection especially if you are still experiencing a fever and/or cough.

Clean your home with regular household cleaners, with extra focus on commonly touched surfaces such as doorknobs, toilets, and sinks/taps. Avoid sharing household items such as drinking glasses, eating utensils, towels, washcloths and bedding.