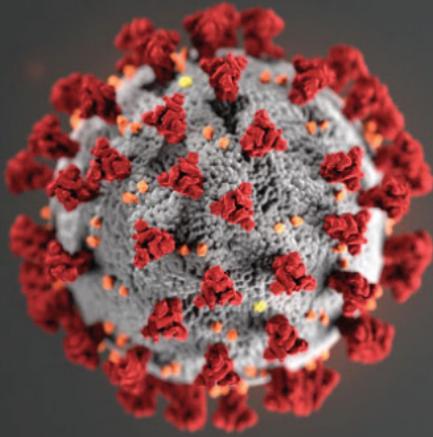




Protect Yourself from COVID-19 in the Workplace



What is SARS-CoV-2?

It is the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

- SARS = severe acute respiratory distress syndrome.
- Spreads easily person-to-person.
- There is little, if any, immunity in humans.

How is it spread? COVID-19 is spread from person to person mainly through inhalation of viral particles when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, or breathes.

When do symptoms appear? Symptoms usually show 2-14 days after exposure. People who are infected can be infectious before they develop symptoms or even if they never develop symptoms.

What are the most common symptoms? Fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Other symptoms may include sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, loss of smell or taste, and gastrointestinal (diarrhea and nausea).

Most people will have mild symptoms and SHOULD NOT go to the hospital or emergency room.

Get medical attention immediately if you have:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest.
- New confusion or inability to arouse.
- Bluish lips or face.

How long does the virus survive outside of the body?

Virus may remain in the air for minutes or hours depending on conditions such as the size of the room and ventilation. On surfaces, it can live for a few hours or up to several days, depending on the conditions and the type of surface. It is likely that it can be killed with a simple disinfectant from the EPA registered list: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Who is at increased risk of severe illness? People with underlying health conditions such as:

- Heart disease
- Lung disease, such as asthma
- Diabetes
- Suppressed immune systems, such as cancer or lupus

Older adults have higher rates of severe illness from COVID-19. Children and younger adults have had less severe illness and death.

Are there treatments or a vaccine? The main treatment is supportive care. There has been some success treating qualified patients with monoclonal antibodies, laboratory-made proteins that mimic the immune system's ability to fight off the COVID-19 virus. Two vaccines were introduced in December of 2020 that are more than 90% effective in preventing COVID-19 disease. It is important that people get vaccinated to stop the spread of the virus.



What are high risks settings for workers? Working around people who are infected with the virus at hospitals or working in settings with large numbers of people, like nursing homes and correctional facilities, poses a higher risk. When high rates of community spread of the virus occurs, risk of infection increases in any work setting where people are not able to be separated from co-workers or customers/clients.

How do I protect myself?

- Stay home when sick.
- Wear a face covering and eye protection. In congregate work settings, wear a fit tested NIOSH approved respirator (N95 at a minimum).
- Wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer frequently, particularly after coughing, sneezing, blowing nose, and using the restroom. Wash thoroughly for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid shaking hands/wash hands after physical contact with others.
- Avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or do it in your sleeve.
- Dispose of tissues in no-touch bins.
- Avoid close contact with coworkers and customers.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as cell phones.
- Avoid sharing equipment if possible.
- Minimize in-person meetings by utilizing phone and emails. Avoid close contact when meetings are necessary.
- Limit unnecessary visitors to the workplace.
- Maintain your physical and emotional health with rest, diet, exercise, and relaxation.
- Be prepared if your child's school, daycare facility, or your worksite is temporarily closed.



How should I maintain mental health and deal with stress?

- Use your phone to stay connected to family and friends. Shift from texting to voice or video calling to feel more connected.
- Keep comfortable. Do more of the things you enjoy doing at home.
- Practice stress relief whenever you feel anxiety building – do some deep breathing, exercise, read, dig in the garden, whatever works for you.
- Avoid unhealthy behavior such as excess drinking or drug use – that will just increase your anxiety afterwards.
- Keep looking forward. Make some plans for six months down the road.

What should I do if I have symptoms?

- With mild symptoms you should stay home, isolate yourself from your family, and rest. DO NOT expose your family or co-workers.
- DO NOT go to the doctor or emergency room unless you develop severe symptoms.
- Call your family doctor or the emergency room before you go.

Information about COVID-19 changes rapidly. It is important to check for the latest updates from reliable sources.