Coronavirus Disease 2019: General Information

Updated May 27, 2020

What is coronavirus disease 2019?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by a new virus strain that can spread from person to person. It has the potential to cause severe illness including pneumonia in some people.

How does the virus spread?

COVID-29 is primarily spread from person to person. You can become infected by coming into close contact (about 6 feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19. You can become infected from respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.

Between people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet).

Through respiratory droplets produced by an infected persons' coughs or sneezes.

It may be possible for the virus to be spread through touching infected surfaces or objects and then touching your own mouth, nose, or possibly eyes, but this is NOT thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

What are the symptoms and severity of illness?

Health experts are still learning about the range of the illness caused by the new virus strain. Reported cases have ranged from patients without any symptoms to mild to severe symptoms. Reports show older adults and people with underlying health conditions are more likely to be severely impacted by COVID-19.

Symptoms can appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. The most common symptoms reported are:

Fever

Cough

Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Additional symptoms reported include:

- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell

- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Who is at risk for coronavirus disease 2019?

Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19. Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions such as COPD, liver disease, heart disease, asthma and diabetes may be at higher risk for more severe illness.

How can I protect myself and loved ones from coronavirus disease 2019?

Here are 10 actions for Nebraskans to be taking now to slow the spread of COVID-19:

1. Stay at least 6 feet away (about 2 arms' length) from others. Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at a higher risk of getting very sick (those over 65 years of age, have serious underlying health conditions or are immunocompromised.)
2. Stay at home and only grocery shop once per week alone.
3. Wear a cloth face covering in public (grocery stores, pharmacies etc.) when you can't stay 6 feet away from others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.
4. Work from home, if possible.
5. Hold conference calls or virtual meetings instead of in person.
6. Stay home if you or someone in your house has a sudden onset of cough or shortness of breath or a fever. Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.
7. Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
8. Wash hands right before you eat.
9. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze then throw the tissue in the trash.
10. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, especially counters, handles, doorknobs, tabletops, remotes and keyboards.

Is there treatment for coronavirus disease 2019?

Currently there is not a vaccine or an antiviral (medicine) to protect against COVID-19. Most people with mild illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever reducing medications to relieve symptoms. However, people can develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.

For more information, please visit: **www.dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus** and **www.cdc.gov/COVID19**