

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Questions & Answers

(Adapted from guidance provided by Dr. David Edwards, Medical Director of Student Health)

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1. What is coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- This coronavirus is a novel (new) virus to infect humans. It is originally from an animal source, with outbreak starting in Wuhan in the Hubei province of China. It was reported on December 31, 2019. Its official name is SARS-CoV-2.

2. How does it spread?

- Person to person infection occurs by close contact transmission of the virus in respiratory droplets through coughing or sneezing within 6 feet (2 meters). Current estimates predict that one sick person is capable of transmission, on average, to 2 healthy people.

3. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Fever (feeling fever or through direct measurement with a thermometer), cough, shortness of breath, body aches.

4. What are the risk factors for the virus?

- Symptoms plus contact within the last 14 days with a person who has the COVID-19 (or person suspect of being infected).
- Symptoms plus recent travel within the past 14 days to a highly affected area (China, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Iran).
- Severe, life-threatening respiratory tract infection without other obvious cause.

5. How long after exposure does it take to develop symptoms?

- Incubation times vary from 2 to 14 days.

6. What do I do if I develop fever, cough, and shortness of breath with exposure to someone with COVID-19 or recent travel to a highly affected country?

- Stay home unless going out for medical care. Do not go to school or work. Avoid public places and mass gatherings such as grocery stores, movie theaters, concerts, church services, restaurants/bars, and sporting events. Avoid using public transportation such as buses, taxis, and ride services such as Uber/Lyft. Wear a well-fitting facial mask if you have to leave your home.
- Stay away from others (family members, roommates, etc.) in the home. Stay in your room with the door closed and have a restroom reserved for your use only if possible. Stay away from pets and animals.
- Do not share towels, sheets, blankets, or eating and drinking utensils with anyone. Do not prepare food for others while you are sick.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue (and dispose of it) or cough and sneeze into your elbow.

- Call ahead **before** visiting your clinic or emergency room to inform them of your symptoms and concern for COVID-19 infection. Once arrived, stay in the car with mask on and ask the clinic or emergency room to call you on your cell phone when they are ready to see you. Do not use the waiting room in the clinic or hospital.

7. Is there a cure for COVID-19?

- Research is underway to find an antiviral medication, but currently there is no proven pharmaceutical cure. Immunity occurs in survivors and may be a key to finding other treatments.

8. Is there a vaccine to prevent COVID-19?

- Research is underway to create a vaccine, but currently there is no vaccine.

9. Is COVID-19 fatal?

- Most people with the infection will experience mild disease with flu-like symptoms, with 81% only having mild to moderate symptoms, with many being asymptomatic. Deaths have occurred in only about 2% of people with the infection.

10. How do I stay healthy during cold/flu season?

- In the United States, influenza is a much more serious threat to your health than COVID-19.
 - If you have not already received an influenza vaccine this season, please see your health care provider or local pharmacist for evaluation.
- Practice hand hygiene with routine washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use of a hand sanitizer containing alcohol if no soap and water are available.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Maintain a healthy diet, get enough sleep, and avoid smoking, vaping, and alcohol intake.

11. If I am feeling well, do I need to wear a mask in public places in the United States?

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend that people who are well wear a facial mask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Rather, they recommend that face masks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent and spread the disease to others.

12. Who is keeping track of this disease and watching out for the public's health?

- The U.S., state, and local governments, including the CDC, Texas and Lubbock County health departments.
- Local hospitals and health care providers.
- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Texas Tech University, and the Student Wellness Center.

13. Are there cases in the U.S.?

- Yes, the U.S. is one of the countries currently reporting cases of COVID-19.
- Please refer to the [map of Coronavirus COVID-19 Global Cases](#) by John Hopkins CSSE for latest information on cases.

14. Are there cases in Texas?

- The CDC has confirmed multiple cases of novel coronavirus in people under federal quarantine at the JBSA-Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio for observation and treatment. There are no other cases in Texas at this time. Please refer to the [Texas Department of State Health Services website](#) for additional information.

15. Do I need to start stockpiling food and water?

- It is wise to be prepared in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency. There is no official recommendation from the government at this time. Plan as you see fit.

16. Should I avoid travel outside the United States?

- The CDC has provided travel guidance including recommendations that travelers avoid all non-essential travel to China, South Korea, Italy, and Iran.
 - Practice “enhanced precautions” if needing to travel to Japan.
 - Practice “usual precautions” if travelling to Hong Kong
 - Other countries classified as “at risk” include Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand.
- Be aware that if you travel to a highly affected area, you may be denied re-entry into the United States or placed under mandatory quarantine for at least 14 days upon re-entry.
- Reconsider participation if planning to visit China, South Korea, Japan, Italy, or Iran.
- If traveling abroad for university-related purposes, travel may be prohibited by university policy depending on current advisories by the U.S. Department of State and the CDC.

For updates on COVID-19, please see the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>