

# Coronavirus

## Ways to avoid being infected

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**I**'m very worried about the new virus beginning to make its way around the world.

### **Can we avoid being infected?**

In December 2019, a new and aggressive form of respiratory infection was discovered in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, and recently has been named COVID-19. The virus is a corona virus and of the same family as the virus that caused the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) epidemic in 2002-2003.

Transmission occurs through droplets spread when infected people cough or sneeze, and it gains access to the body through the respiratory tract (lungs). The symptoms include fever, cough, muscle pain, shortness of breath, and fatigue; some patients may have diarrhea, and others very mild to no symptoms at all. Progression of the disease may lead to severe pneumonia with lung-tissue destruction and death. It has spread outside of China, and there's no way of predicting how widespread and severe this outbreak may yet become. Many countries have placed measures in place to contain the spread, including making this a quarantinable disease.

The infectious period is between two and 14 days. The time period for quarantine (isolation from others) is two weeks.

No vaccine is yet available, and treatment is symptomatic. No known COVID-19 antiviral medications are presently available. The production of a vaccine—although a priority—may take up to a year to prove efficacy and safety. Those who haven't been immunized against influenza seem to have more severe symptoms and worse outcomes. It's difficult to accurately assess the death rate from COVID-19 as not every case has been reported, but it's presently estimated at 2 percent.

### **Please practice the standard universal precautions:**

- Frequently clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
- Follow the coughing and sneezing etiquette: sneeze into the folded arm; cover your cough. Take masks with you when traveling. Should you encounter situations where people cough and sneeze and are in close proximity, don't hesitate to use your mask (airports, airplane cabin, lobbies, malls, student classes and other gatherings, etc.).
- Maintain a social distance—at least 3 feet or 1 meter—between yourself and other people. Avoid close contact with those who are coughing or sniffing.
- Avoid touching/rubbing your eyes, nose, and mouth.

- If you develop a cough and experience changes in your breathing, seek medical help early and share your travel history with the health-care provider.
- Avoid open markets and direct contact with animals/animal products.
- Follow careful food-safety practices (well-cooked food, clean produce, pasteurized milk, etc.).
- Do not avoid the flu vaccine.
- Avoid travel to endemic areas; check out the WHO travel advisory against travel to China.

If you think you've been exposed by travel or contact with an affected individual, seek advice from your primary-care physician. Be sure to disclose your travel history. There's global awareness, and this isn't the time to panic; but rather to quietly trust in God.

#### **Sidebar:**

##### **For more information:**

- **Novel coronavirus (COVID-19)**—  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- **Advice for the public**—<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>
- **Travel advice**—<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/travel-advice>
- **Risk communication and community engagement**—  
[https://www.who.int/publications-detail/risk-communication-and-community-engagement-readiness-and-initial-response-for-novel-coronaviruses-\(-ncov\)](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/risk-communication-and-community-engagement-readiness-and-initial-response-for-novel-coronaviruses-(-ncov))
- **Proper handwashing technique**—  
[https://www.who.int/gpsc/clean\\_hands\\_protection/en/](https://www.who.int/gpsc/clean_hands_protection/en/)
- **Science behind handwashing techniques**—  
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-handwashing.html>

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