

## What is COVID-19?

This is a new virus that comes from a family of coronaviruses. Although it typically infects specific animal species, in this rare occasion it has spread to humans.

## How does it spread?

COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets of an infected person, it is **not** airborne.

- Respiratory droplet spread of disease means that germs can travel inside the droplets of a cough or sneeze from a sick person to a well person when the droplets enter the eyes, nose or mouth of the well person. This can occur within about 3 feet of contact between people.
- The disease can also be spread if you touch droplets from an infected person and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, thus introducing the germs to your body.
- This means that you **cannot** inhale COVID-19 from an infected person if they are sitting greater than 3 feet from you.

## What are the symptoms?

The following are differences between the symptoms of a cold, flu, outdoor allergies, and coronavirus:

- Cold: Sneezing, runny/stuffy nose, sore throat, cough, watery eyes, post-nasal drip
- Flu: Muscle/body aches, runny/stuffy nose, headaches, sore throat, cough, fever/chills, fatigue
- Allergies: Sneezing, runny/stuffy nose, and itchy nose, eyes, throat, or ears
- Coronavirus: Cough, shortness of breath, fever

## Who is at risk?

According to the CDC, the most at risk population includes the elderly (those 65+) and those who have a chronic disease (i.e. diabetes, heart disease, lung disease) or are immunocompromised (i.e. cancer).

Precautions for this population include the following in addition to general precautions below:

- Avoid large crowds or gatherings if possible, including non-essential travel
- Ensure you have needed medications on hand, especially inhalers for those with lung conditions
- Have household items and groceries on hand

## What are precautions I can take?

- **Hand washing** is the first line of defense against spreading germs.

- This consists of using soap and water to lather and vigorously scrub for 20 seconds between your fingers, rings, fronts palms, and under nails.
- If soap & water is not available, use a 60% alcohol hand sanitizer (percentage listed in ingredients)
- Avoid touching your face- eyes, nose, and mouth- as these are entry points into your body if you hands are unwashed.
- Clean highly touched and used areas (i.e. phone, keyboard, Ipad, kindle) with disinfectant spray at least daily. Be sure to let disinfectant air dry, this is how it kills the germs.
- If you are coughing or sneezing, do so in a tissue, throw the tissue away, and then wash your hands.
- If you are feeling sick, especially with a fever, stay home and isolate yourself unless you are seeking medical care. This is the same for the caregiver of someone who is sick.

## How do I prepare for this?

- Know people who you can count on and/or contact should you need to stay home but are in need of food, medications, or any other supplies.
- If you feel sick and have a fever, **contact your doctor first**. They can direct you as to the best way to be seen in their office for treatment.
- If you are experiencing new or worsening shortness of breath, or have a medical emergency, call 911 and notify the dispatch if you are being evaluated for COVID-19.

According to the CDC, most people who become infected with COVID-19 will have mild symptoms. The concern is for the at risk population identified above. This is why the CDC has recommended measures, such as social distancing, to best protect this population and slow the spread of the disease overall. At this time, the best thing we can do is to remain calm, listen to direction from public health officials, be mindful to help those in need, and be prayerful for communities across the globe.

\*All information was obtained from [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus), please visit their site for updated information.