

What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Information as of April 2, 2020 – This is a rapidly evolving situation and risk assessment may change. This information serves as a general information guide and does not supersede professional medical advice. Contact your own medical provider or call 2-1-1 with any concerns.

What is 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

COVID-19 is a new virus that causes respiratory disease in people and can spread from person-to-person.

Can people in Los Angeles get COVID-19?

Yes. There is currently community-transmission (person-to-person) in Los Angeles County. Those with higher likelihood of infection include those who: 1) have had contact with someone with COVID-19, 2) have traveled to an affected country in the past 14 days, or 3) are a healthcare provider or work with vulnerable populations.

How does COVID-19 spread?

Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from infected persons to others through coughing and sneezing, close personal contact, or by touching a surface with the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands. People who are infected but do not feel sick can unknowingly pass the infection.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients have reported *mild to severe respiratory illness* with the following symptoms 2-14 days after exposure:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath



Emergency warning signs that necessitate *immediate* medical attention may include (but are not limited to):

- Extreme difficulty breathing (gasping for air or cannot talk without catching breath)
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

Does wearing a mask help?



As a universal precaution, all LA County residents are now recommended to wear *non-medical* face coverings when in public (e.g. reusable masks, scarves, extra cloth), in addition to physical distancing. Medical-grade and N95 masks are to be reserved for medical workers and first responders.

What is the treatment?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed. There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with the virus can seek medical supportive care to help relieve symptoms.

How can I protect myself?

- 1) Avoid close contact with people who are sick (adhere to all social distancing measures and stay at least 6 feet away from others). 
- 2) Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. 
- 3) Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, if soap and water are not available. 
- 4) Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects/surfaces with cleaning spray/wipes. 
- 5) Everyone should cancel all non-essential travel, appointments, and errands. All Californians are ordered to stay home except for essential needs. 
- 6) Individuals who are over 65 years of age, have compromised immune systems, are pregnant, and/or have serious chronic medical conditions (e.g. heart disease, lung disease, diabetes) are considered **HIGH RISK** and are strongly recommended to remain at home.

I am feeling sick with symptoms. What should I do?

- 1) If you are experiencing symptoms (fever, cough, or shortness of breath), call your doctor. Call 2-1-1 if you do not have a doctor. Do not go to the emergency room or call 9-1-1.
- 2) If you have a true emergency, are experiencing severe symptoms and did not get an immediate response from your physician, or need immediate medical care, go to your local urgent care or call 9-1-1.

I want to be tested for COVID-19. What do I do?

Not everyone needs to be tested for COVID-19. To be tested, you must first be screened by a medical provider or local health department, who will make the decision based on your exposure risk and symptoms. If you qualify, further instructions will be given to visit a testing site.

I have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been told by a clinician that I likely have COVID-19. What do I do?

- 1) Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 OR are told by a clinician they are presumed to be positive for COVID-19 are required to self-isolate for a period of 7 days AND 3 days of being symptom-free.
- 2) Individuals who have been in close contact with someone who is positive or presumed positive must also quarantine themselves for 14 days from their last exposure to that person.

Sources:

- 1) U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- 2) World Health Organization (WHO) <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- 3) Los Angeles Department of Public Health <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/>

COVID-19 MYTHS vs REALITY

- 1. Myth:** Only the elderly are susceptible to the disease.
Fact: People of all ages can be infected by COVID-19. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (e.g. asthma, diabetes, heart disease) or compromised immune systems appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.
- 2. Myth:** Antibiotics are effective in preventing and treating the new coronavirus.
Fact: Antibiotics do not work against viruses, only bacteria. If you are hospitalized, you may receive antibiotics since bacterial co-infection is possible.
- 3. Myth:** Pets and animals can spread the coronavirus.
Fact: At present, there is no evidence that companion animals/pets (dogs, cats) can be infected with the new coronavirus. However, their bodies can act as a contaminated surface/object to transmit the disease.
- 4. Myth:** Successfully holding your breath for 10 seconds without coughing means you do not have COVID-19.
Fact: NO. Successfully completing a breathing exercise DOES NOT confirm the absence of COVID-19 or any other lung disease. The best way to confirm COVID-19 is with a laboratory test, after being screened by a medical provider or your local health department.
- 5. Myth:** Mosquito bites can pass COVID-19 from person-to-person.
Fact: There has been no evidence to date that suggests the new coronavirus can be transmitted by mosquito bites. COVID-19 is caused by a respiratory virus which spreads primarily through droplets generated by coughing/sneezing or by droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose.
- 6. Myth:** High temperatures effectively kill the new coronavirus.
Fact: Exposing yourself to the sun or temperatures higher than 25C does not prevent COVID-19. Likewise, hand dryers are not effective in killing the new coronavirus. Wash your hands with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- 7. Myth:** Certain vitamins, supplements, or foods (e.g. garlic) can prevent COVID-19.
Fact: Vitamins and supplements will help optimize your immune system, as will proper sleep, diet, and exercise. Garlic is a healthy food that may have some anti-microbial properties. However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating these foods or supplements will definitely protect people from the new coronavirus.

Sources:

- 1) U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- 2) World Health Organization (WHO)
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- 3) Los Angeles Department of Public Health
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/>