

How to Avoid Getting Sick

In seemingly no time, COVID-19 (previously referred to as the coronavirus) has become the biggest health concern experienced in many years. It has sparked alarm worldwide to the extent that the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared a global health emergency and many countries are seeing a rise in confirmed cases.

According to the WHO, more than 100 countries have now reported laboratory-confirmed and potentially deadly cases of COVID-19.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent or treat COVID-19, so we all must pay close attention and do all we can to avoid exposure to both this new virus and also the flu. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), above all else we need to wash our hands often and do it properly.

Social distancing refers to the practice of avoiding large gatherings. You should consider avoiding conferences, large social events, sporting events, cruises, or any gathering of people in close quarters. If your job allows it, telecommuting is also a way to protect yourself and others. Do not go to work if you are ill. Social distancing is important for everyone to protect our community. Social distancing is especially important if you are at increased risk of serious COVID-19 or if you live with someone at increased risk. Risk factors for severe COVID-19 include age greater than 60 years and chronic medical conditions, including diabetes, lung disease, or heart disease. If you yourself are ill, even if you have only mild symptoms, social distancing protects other people in our workplaces and community.

According to the CDC, the proper steps to washing your hands include, in sequential order, wetting your hands with running warm or cold water and then turning off the tap. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails and vigorously scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Rinse your hands well with clean running water and then dry your hands with a clean towel or air dry them.

Other tips to help you avoid COVID-19 include not having close contact with people who are sick and to stop touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Whenever you can, cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and immediately throw it away. You'll also want to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

While COVID-19 is largely a respiratory virus, the CDC says symptoms include gastrointestinal discomfort (nausea, vomiting or diarrhea), a fever and a dry cough before respiratory symptoms appear. In some cases, the virus can cause pneumonia and is potentially life-threatening.

The CDC states that most people who get sick with COVID-19 will get better in time. Recovery time varies and, for people who are not severely ill, may be similar to the aftermath of a flu-like illness. For those who have pneumonia, it may take days to weeks to recover, and in severe, life-threatening cases, it may take months for a person to recover, or the person may die.

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. Those who contract this virus should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms and for severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.

If you are ill with flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, please call your health center or clinic before coming to your appointment. The Indiana State Department of Health call center for health care providers and members of the public who have concerns about

COVID-19 is staffed 24 hours a day at 317.233.7125.

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