

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) INFORMATION AND HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Diagnosis

COVID-19 is caused by a virus called Coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a common cause of the common cold. COVID-19 is a novel (newly discovered) Coronavirus that is currently causing illness across the world. Most of those infected will have a limited and mild case. It will feel more like a cold. Most people who become infected with COVID-19 will be able to care for themselves at home. Currently there is no specific anti-viral treatment for COVID-19, and there is no vaccine at this time. Antibiotics such as penicillin do not kill viruses.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Typical COVID-19 symptoms include fever, muscle aches, cough and shortness of breath that can last for two weeks or even longer.

20% of those infected with COVID-19 can have more serious symptoms such as high fever or breathing problems which need oxygen and hospital treatment.

Preventing Spread

COVID-19 is mostly spread through person-to-person close contact (within about 6 feet). Small droplets from coughing and sneezing can enter the mouth and lungs of those nearby. It is also possible that infection can happen by touching a surface or object that has virus on it such as a table or door knob and then touching their own eyes, mouth or nose, but this is not the main cause of spread.

People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest) and especially with coughing. Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this, but this is not thought to be the main cause of spread.

COVID-19 appears to spread easily

- **Stay home when you are sick**
- Avoid people who are sick (6 feet rule)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe
- CDC does not recommend facemask use for those people who are well
- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others
- Use a facemask and gloves if you are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility)
 - Gloves should never replace appropriate hand hygiene
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Wash especially after using the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty

Treatments

- **In general, follow these three basic rules:**

- (1) Keep warm and rest as much as possible. If you feel like resting, you should.
- (2) Take plenty of fluids. Food is not as important since appetite will return when you are well.
- (3) For fever, take Tylenol or Motrin in normal doses (see label on the bottle).

- **If cough is present:** Humidification and drinking lots of fluids helps to moisten and loosen up sticky mucus. Non-prescription drugs designed to suppress cough, such as Delysm, Robitussin, Mucinex are occasionally helpful. If you use an inhaler, you might need to use it more often.
- **If throat is sore:** Gargle with warm water (1/2 tsp salt in 1/2 glass of water). Try cold packs to the outside of your throat to help ease the pain of swallowing. Humidification of the air you breathe (use vaporizer, pans of evaporating water, or steaming tub or shower) and lots of fluids help.
- **If temperature is elevated:** Fluids are doubly important. Fever medicine (such as Tylenol or Motrin) should control temperature. Persistent temperature elevation of 103-104 degrees is a danger sign.
- **If nausea and/or diarrhea are present:** Eat only clear liquids, soups, or juices as tolerated. Remember fluids are important to prevent dehydration.

If your symptoms worsen call The Polyclinic for further instructions, especially if you notice:

- Persistent temperature elevation greater than 103-104 degrees despite fever medication
- Bloody sputum or increasing chest pain
- Increasing difficulty getting your breath
- Stiff neck preventing bending neck and placing chin on chest

More information is available for you through these links:

[CDC COVID-19 FAQs](#)

[King County Coronavirus Common Questions Page](#)

WA Department of Health Novel Corona Virus Fact Sheet

- [English](#)
- [Chinese Simplified: 新型冠状病毒 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Chinese Traditional: 新型冠状病毒 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Khmer: វីរុសកូរ៉ូណាប្រភេទថ្មី \(PDF\)](#)
- [Korean: 신종 코로나바이러스 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Russian: Новый штамм коронавируса \(PDF\)](#)
- [Somali: Caabuqa Xalfaafka Wadnaha \(PDF\)](#)
- [Spanish: Nuevo coronavirus \(PDF\)](#)
- [Thai: ไวรัสโคโรนาสายพันธุ์ใหม่ \(PDF\)](#)
- [Vietnamese: Vi-rút Corona Mới \(PDF\)](#)