Frequently Asked Questions
COVID-19

Q: What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?
A: COVID-19, or coronavirus disease 2019, is respiratory disease caused by one of the seven coronaviruses known to infect humans. It was first identified in humans in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019. The virus that causes COVID-19 is called SARS-CoV-2.

Q: Why am I at risk?
A: There is community spread across Ohio and the United States, meaning you can pick up the virus that causes COVID-19 from people you know or from out in your community from unknown sources, much like you catch the flu.

Q: What are the symptoms?
A: Symptoms, which generally appear two to 14 days after exposure, include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. Symptoms range from mild to severe; however, some people with COVID-19 have no symptoms. Older adults, people with chronic health conditions, and people with compromised immune systems are more likely to become more severely ill. The CDC will update its list of possible symptoms as more is learned about COVID-19.

Q: How does it spread?
A: COVID-19 is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person between people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) with one another and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Q: What can I do to prevent it?
A: It is still recommended that you stay home as much as possible. Work from home if you can. When going out, try to maintain a 6-foot distance from others as much as possible, wear a face covering and follow the recommended guidelines for the type of business or venue you are visiting. Use the personal prevention protection methods shown in the graphic below.

Clean high-touch areas — counters, tables, doorknobs, light switches, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, nightstands — oftenusing household cleaning spray or wipes according to label directions. A list of disinfectants registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 can be accessed here.

Q: Should I wear a mask?
A: A public health order dated July 23 requires that Ohioans wear cloth face coverings to cover their nose and mouth when they are in any indoor location that is not a residence; outdoors and unable to consistently maintain a distance of 6 feet or more from people who are not members of their family/household; waiting for, riding, driving, or operating public transportation, a taxi, car service, or a ride sharing vehicle. A number of exceptions can be found in the order. Masks do not replace the need for social distancing, frequent hand cleaning, and other everyday preventive actions. They should **never be used** on children younger than 2, anyone with breathing problems, or anyone who cannot easily remove them on their own. Do not use medical masks, which must be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.

Q: What if I have to go to work?

A: Whenever possible stay at least 6 feet from other people. Wear a face covering, wash your hands often, try not to touch your face, and frequently disinfect your work area with disinfecting cleanser. Don't share equipment used near the face and don't congregate in breakrooms or other areas. Additional tips to prevent infection are found in the graphic below.

Q: What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

A: Call a healthcare professional if you develop symptoms listed above. Older people, people with underlying medical conditions, and people with compromised immune symptoms should contact a healthcare provider early. If you experience severe symptoms (e.g., persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, bluish lips or face, or other concerning symptoms), contact a healthcare provider or emergency department and seek care immediately.

Q: Should I visit my doctor for concerns not related to COVID-19?

A: You should make all medically necessary visits as recommended by your healthcare provider. Ask for teleservices if available and practical. Providers are required to meet several criteria, including infection control and other environmental practices. They also must maintain adequate amounts of personal protection equipment for healthcare workers, and other supplies, equipment, and medicine needed for each patient and all phases of care.

Q: Where can I get tested?

A: Testing for COVID-19 is critical to helping stop the spread of this virus. Many options are available for Ohioans seeking a test. For information, detailed information and resources, visit the "Get Tested for COVID-19" and "Testing and Community Health Centers" pages on coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Q: Can I get the flu and COVID-19 at the same time?

A: Yes. It is possible to test positive for seasonal influenza (the flu) or other respiratory infections and COVID-19 at the same time. Because some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, it may be hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Testing may be needed to help confirm a diagnosis. With the flu season coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, the CDC is urging everyone older than 6 months of age to get a flu shot to help protect themselves and their communities.

It's especially important for those at increased risk of developing serious flu-related complications, including:
• Children and infants.
• Adults age 65 and older.
• Pregnant women (and women up to two weeks postpartum).
• Adults with serious or chronic health conditions, such as heart disease, lung disease, asthma, kidney disease, cancer, and diabetes.

Maintaining routine vaccinations can help prevent illnesses, reduce stress on the healthcare system, and protect vulnerable populations during the pandemic. While a seasonal flu shot will not prevent COVID-19, it may reduce the risk to you and your loved ones from becoming seriously ill with the flu.

Q: What is the new COVID-19 variant now confirmed in the United States?

A: Rapid spread of a new COVID-19 variant was first recognized in the United Kingdom in mid-December, and cases have been confirmed in the United States. Viruses constantly change through mutation, and new variants of a virus are expected to occur over time. Multiple variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 have been documented in the United States and globally during this pandemic. Most variants do not change how the virus behaves, and many disappear. There is no evidence that these variants cause more severe illness or increased risk of death.

According to the CDC, scientists are working to learn more about how easily this variant and other variants might spread, whether they could cause more severe illness, and whether currently authorized vaccines will protect people against the variants. Public health experts are also studying if variants are detected by currently available viral tests, and if they respond to medicines being used to treat COVID-19 patients. The CDC's recommendations for slowing the spread — wearing masks, staying at least 6 feet apart from others, avoiding crowds, ventilating indoor spaces, and washing hands often — will also prevent the spread of this variant.

Q: Is it safe to donate blood?

A: Continue to donate blood if you are well and able. Blood centers have been by provided recommendations that will keep donors and staff safe, such as spacing donor chairs 6 feet apart, thoroughly adhering to environmental cleaning practices, and encouraging donors to make donation appointments ahead of time.

Q: Is food safe? Can I get COVID-19 from a person who handles my food?

A: Currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. However, the virus that causes COVID-19 can spread from person-to-person. Food workers who are sick should stay home until they no longer pose a risk of infecting others. Anyone handling, preparing, or serving food should always follow safe food handling procedures, such as washing hands and surfaces often. It is also critical to follow the [four key steps of food safety](#) — clean, separate, cook, and chill — to prevent foodborne illness.

Q: What should I do if I experience price gouging or scams?

A: Scammers are trying to monopolize on the fear and uncertainty that COVID-19 has brought to so many. Watch out for claims of products or medications that can prevent or treat COVID-19 or anyone asking for your personal or banking information. If you suspect any unfair or deceptive sales practices, contact the office of Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost at www.OhioProtects.org or 1-800-282-0515. Read more about this issue [here](#).

Q: Can I get COVID-19 from my pet? If I'm sick, can I make my pet sick?

A: We are still learning about this virus, but it appears that it can spread from people to animals in some situations, especially after close contact with a person sick with COVID-19. We know that cats, dogs, and a few other types of animals can be infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, but we don't yet know all of the animals that can get infected. There have been reports of animals being infected with the virus worldwide. Currently, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in the spread of SARS-CoV-2 to people.

Updated Dec. 31, 2020

See [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](#) for answers to commonly asked questions about COVID-19 vaccines.

See [Frequently Asked Questions about Diagnosis, Treatment and Quarantine](#) for answers to commonly asked questions about COVID-19 testing, diagnosis and quarantine protocols.

For additional information, visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov](#).

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

Ohio | Department of Health

PREVENTION

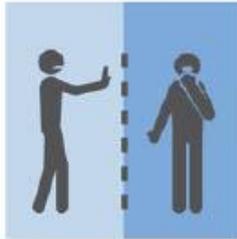Protect yourself and others from COVID-19 by taking these precautions.

For additional information call **1-833-4-ASK-ODH** or visit **coronavirus.ohio.gov**.

STAY HOME EXCEPT FOR WORK AND OTHER NEEDS

WEAR A FACE COVERING WHEN AROUND ANYONE FROM OUTSIDE YOUR HOUSEHOLD

PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING OF AT LEAST 6 FEET FROM OTHERS

DO NOT HOLD GATHERINGS OF MORE THAN 10 PEOPLE

WASH HANDS OFTEN WITH WATER AND SOAP (20 SECONDS OR LONGER)

AVOID TOUCHING YOUR EYES, NOSE, OR MOUTH WITH UNWASHED HANDS OR AFTER TOUCHING SURFACES

USE DELIVERY, DRIVE-THRU, AND PICKUP SERVICES WHEN AVAILABLE

CLEAN AND DISINFECT "HIGH-TOUCH" SURFACES OFTEN

DON'T WORK WHEN SICK

QUARANTINE AFTER RETURNING FROM A STATE WITH HIGH COVID-19 SPREAD

12-7-2020

Additional information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

For more information, visit: coronavirus.ohio.gov