



Health & Safety Advisory

March 4, 2020

From: Dr. Angel V. Mendoza Jr., Chief Medical Officer

The Differences Between Common Human Coronaviruses and COVID-19

There have been some questions from staff about the different types of coronaviruses, and we wanted to provide clarity about the difference between common human coronaviruses and COVID-19.

Coronaviruses belong to a family of viruses that cause mild illnesses like a cold, to more serious illnesses like pneumonia.

The novel coronavirus you are hearing about in the news, now known as COVID-19, is a new type that had not been previously identified. Infections with this new virus have been reported in many countries, including the U.S. For an updated list of affected areas, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus). Commonly reported symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Most people (80%) with COVID-19 will feel like they have a bad cold or the flu. Some people will require hospitalization. People who are at most risk for severe illness are the elderly or those with other health conditions.

In addition to COVID-19, there many types of human coronaviruses including types 229E, NL63, OC43 and HKU1, which usually cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illnesses, like the common cold. These are not new. Most people get infected with one or more of these viruses at some point in their lives. Young children are most likely to get infected, but people can have multiple infections in their lifetime.

There are ways to prevent viral respiratory infections, including COVID-19:

- If you feel sick, stay home.

- Get the flu shot—it's not too late. Although the flu shot will not protect you from COVID-19, it will help prevent the flu, which has similar symptoms to this coronavirus.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve. Do not use your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

If you have fever, cough and/or shortness of breath, and recently traveled to an area ongoing spread of COVID-19, or have been in close contact with someone who has recently traveled to any of those areas, go to your doctor.

If you have these symptoms, but no travel history, stay home and call your doctor.

- If you need connection to a health care provider, call 311.
- Hospital staff will not ask about immigration status. Receiving health care is not a public benefit identified by the public charge test.

Please check nyc.gov/coronavirus for the latest updates.



Health & Safety Advisory

March 3, 2020

From: Dr. Angel V. Mendoza Jr., Chief Medical Officer

Update: What You Need to Know About COVID-19

Novel Coronavirus

- Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause mild illnesses like a cold, to more serious illnesses like pneumonia.
- Infections with this new virus have been reported in many countries, including the U.S. For an updated list of affected areas, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).
- The virus is likely to be spread from person to person, but it is currently unclear how easily it spreads.
- Commonly reported symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.
- Most people (80%) with COVID-19 will feel like they have a bad cold or the flu. Some people will require hospitalization. People who are at most risk for severe illness are elderly or have other health conditions.

What should New Yorkers do?

New Yorkers should go about their daily lives, but take certain precautions:

- Get the flu shot—it's not too late. Although the flu shot will not protect you from COVID-19, it will help prevent the flu which has similar symptoms to this coronavirus.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands).

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- If you feel sick, stay home.
- If you have fever, cough and/or shortness of breath, and recently traveled to an area with ongoing spread of coronavirus, or have been in close contact with someone who has recently traveled to any of those areas, go to your doctor.
- If you have these symptoms, but no travel history, stay home and call your doctor.
 - If you need connection to a health care provider, call 311.
 - Hospital staff will not ask about immigration status. Receiving health care is not a public benefit identified by the public charge test.

At this time, New Yorkers **do not** need to:

- Limit travel within the city.
- Avoid public gatherings and public transportation.
- Change anything about where you get your food or how you prepare it.
- Wear a face mask if you are not sick. Face masks are only recommended if directed by a health care provider.
 - People wear protective face masks for many reasons, including seasonal allergies, pollution or protecting those around them from a common cold. They should **not** be harassed or targeted for wearing one.

What can international travelers do to protect themselves?

- Avoid nonessential travel to affected areas. Visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers) for the latest travel health notices.
- If you were recently outside of the U.S and do not have a fever, cough and/or shortness of breath go about your daily life but monitor yourself for these symptoms. If they develop go to your doctor.
- If you were recently outside of the U.S. and have a fever, cough and/or shortness of breath, go to your doctor.
- If your doctor asks you to stay home:

- Avoid going in public, to school or to work until you have been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of fever reducing drugs like Tylenol or ibuprofen.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve, not with your hands.
- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

It is important that we separate facts from fear and guard against stigma.

A lot of information circulating about coronavirus on social media and even in some news reporting is not based in the facts. Support your friends, neighbors and colleagues by proactively sharing this message and countering misinformation. Obtain information about COVID-19 from trusted sources like the NYC Health Department, the CDC, and the World Health Organization (WHO).

If you are being harassed due to your race, nation of origin or other identities, you can report discrimination or harassment to the NYC Commission on Human Rights by calling **311** and saying “human rights.”

If you are experiencing stress or feel anxious, contact NYC Well at 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355) or text WELL to 65173. NYC Well is a confidential help line that is staffed 24/7 by trained counselors who can provide brief supportive therapy, crisis counseling, and connections to behavioral health treatment, in more than 200 languages.

This is a rapidly changing situation. Please check nyc.gov/health/coronavirus for the latest updates.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

New Yorkers, here's what YOU need to know about the coronavirus



You can prevent the spread of any virus by staying home if you feel sick, covering your sneezes and coughs with your sleeve (not your hands) and washing your hands often.



If you feel flu-like symptoms (fever, cough and shortness of breath), and recently traveled to an area affected by coronavirus, or have been in close contact with someone who has, go to your doctor. If you have symptoms but no travel history, stay home and call your doctor. If you need connection to a medical professional, call 311.



If you're feeling well, no need to wear a face mask - and don't worry if someone else does. People wear masks for many reasons - be respectful.

Check www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus for updates and other helpful information.



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Health & Safety Advisory

March 2, 2020

From: Dr. Angel V. Mendoza Jr., Chief Medical Officer

Update on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The latest official reports on the spread of the novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19) show that it has been detected globally, primarily in China, but also in other countries including the United States. There are recent reports from California and Washington State of cases that do not include a history of travel to an affected area.

The recent first case in NYC is travel-related and the individual is in home isolation. At this time, **the risk to New Yorkers remains low**. The risk of getting sick from seasonal flu is still much higher, and it is not too late to get a flu shot (visit nyc.gov/flu or text FLU to 877877 for your nearest vaccination location).

What should you do?

- Go about your daily lives as usual. If you are feeling stressed, contact NYC WELL at 888-NYC-WELL or text WELL to 65173.
- Practice the same precautions that you would during flu season.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve, not your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water (for at least 20 seconds) or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- If you feel sick, stay home.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid any nonessential travel to affected areas. Visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers) for the latest travel health notices.

- If you recently traveled outside of the U.S. and have a fever, cough or shortness of breath, call your health care provider to see if you should be evaluated or stay at home.
- If you have a fever, cough or shortness of breath and are feeling unsure about how to take care of yourself, it is always best to call your health care provider.

At this time, you **do not** need to:

- Wear a face mask if you are not sick. Face masks are only recommended if directed by health care providers.
- Limit travel within the city.
- Avoid public gatherings and public transportation.
- Change anything about where you get your food or how you prepare it.

It is important that we obtain information that is based on science and only from reliable sources.

For the latest information, visit nyc.gov/health/coronavirus or cdc.gov/coronavirus.

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