

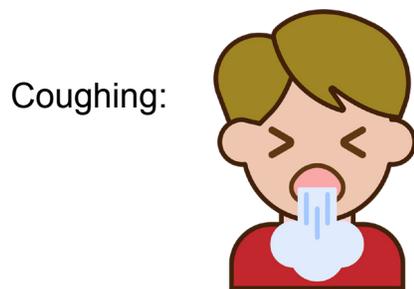
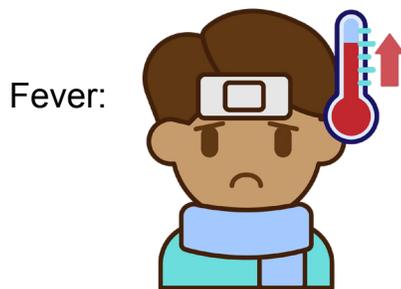
## What is novel coronavirus?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus strain spreading from person-to-person. It is currently in the United States and many other countries, after originating in China. Health experts are concerned because this new virus has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people, especially people over age 60 or who have weakened immune systems due to heart disease, lung disease, cancers, diabetes, and many other diseases that weaken the immune system.

As we've already seen around the world, an overwhelming majority of people who contract the virus, will likely have a mild disease from which they will speedily and fully recover. However, we cannot rule out that we could see a growing number of cases in Kansas City and some will be severe.

## What are the symptoms?

People who have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus.



## Should I go to the doctor or ER if I have COVID-19 symptoms?

Call your healthcare professional first if you develop symptoms (cough, fever or other respiratory problems) and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you have recently traveled from an area with widespread or ongoing spread of COVID-19. Tell them your risk factors and symptoms so they can provide you with further instructions.

(Link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html#geographic> )

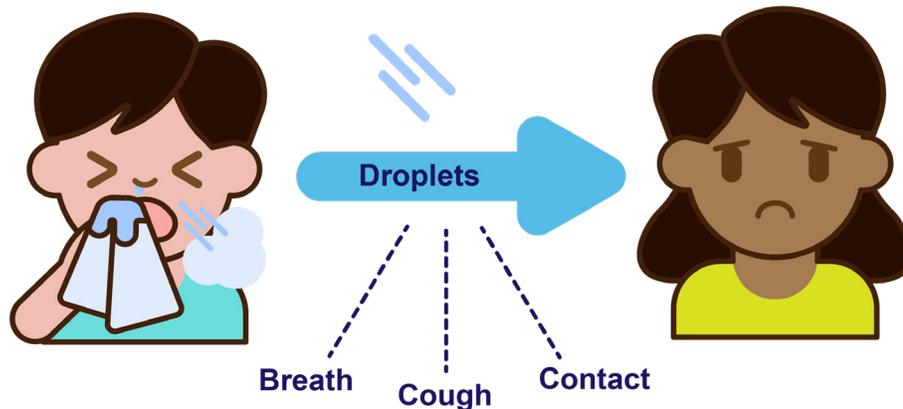
If you have mild symptoms, do not go to the emergency room. Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs. If you have difficulty breathing, it doesn't mean you have novel coronavirus, but you should call 911.

If you're over 60 or have underlying conditions, come up with a plan with your doctor to identify your health risks for coronavirus. Contact your doctor right away if you do have symptoms.

## How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is a new disease and we are still learning about it to determine how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes and to what extent it may spread in the United States and Kansas City.

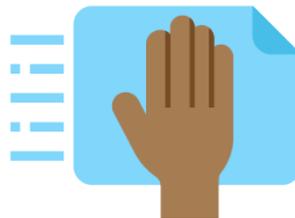
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
  - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within approx.. 6 feet).
  - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- By touching a surface or object with the virus & then touching mouth, nose or eyes. (Currently it is believed the virus can live on an object from 2 hours to 9 days) At this time this is not considered the most serious threat or the main way the virus spreads.



\*Droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

## How can I protect myself from coronavirus?

- Wash hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid shaking hands.
- At some point, the health department may recommend social distancing. (Social distancing measures may include limiting large groups of people coming together, closing buildings and canceling events.)



## Who should wear a mask?

- If you are healthy, you only need to wear a mask if you are taking care of a person with suspected COVID-19 infection.
- Wear a mask if you are sick and are around others that may become ill.
- Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
- If you wear a mask, then you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly.



## Can I get a test to make sure I don't have it?

**CALL FIRST** — Call your medical provider before going to their offices or visiting an emergency room to ask for a COVID-19 test. Medical providers need time to prepare so they can safely collect the required swabs and samples and keep other patients safe from exposure. Talking to your medical provider will also help you understand what to expect during the testing process. Commercial testing is now available but those tests have to be ordered by the medical provider and samples taken before sending to the commercial lab. If the medical provider wants to send the samples through the State lab to be tested, it must meet criteria and be approved by the State for testing.

## Should I avoid large gatherings?

The KCMO Health Director Dr. Rex Archer and KCMO EMS Medical Director Dr. Erica Carney, recommend:

- People who are 60 years of age or older, should strongly consider not attending events with large crowds.
- People who are 70 years old or more should not attend events with large crowds.
- People with underlying health conditions, such as respiratory illnesses, heart disease, high blood pressure, or pregnancy, should not attend events with large crowds.

Younger people should continue to use good hygiene and avoid handshakes. Remember to wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, cover your cough, and stay home if you are sick.

## Is it true people without symptoms can spread the virus before they know they're sick?

People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).

Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms and there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus. But this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.



## Can a person test negative and later test positive?

In the early stages of infection, it is possible the virus might not be detected. A negative result means that the virus that causes COVID-19 was not found in that specific sample.

If a person with symptoms receives a negative test result, it likely means the COVID-19 virus is not causing their current illness.

## Will warm weather stop the outbreak of COVID-19?

It is not yet known if weather and temperature impact the spread of COVID-19. Some viruses, like the common cold and flu, spread more during cold weather months but that does not mean it is impossible to become sick with these viruses during other months. At this time, it is not known whether the spread of COVID-19 will decrease when weather becomes warmer. There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity and other features associated with COVID-19.

## Is there a vaccine or cure?

There are currently no medications specifically approved for coronavirus. Most people with mild coronavirus illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. However, some cases develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.

## What can I do to prepare?

### Businesses and organizations:

All employers and organizations need to consider how best to decrease the spread of acute respiratory illness and lower the impact of COVID-19 in their workplace or organization in the event of an outbreak. They should identify and be ready to implement strategies to protect their staff from COVID-19 while ensuring continuity of operations. For detailed guidance, businesses and organizations should consult [kcmo.gov/coronavirus](https://www.kcmo.gov/coronavirus).

<https://www.kcmo.gov/city-hall/departments/health/coronavirus>

### Families and individuals:

- Make sure you have at least a 14-day supply of food and the medications you must have for chronic conditions.
- Create a household plan of action in case schools close for an extended period. Discourage children and teens from gathering in other public places while school is dismissed to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in the community.
- Discuss sick-leave policies and telework options with your employer so you can be prepared if you are sick or need to stay home to care for a sick household member.
- Create an emergency contact list.
- Identify and help others in your community who may not have the income or resources to prepare for an outbreak.
- More ways to prepare can be found at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html#plan). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html#plan>

