Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): What You Need to Know

What is Coronavirus?

- Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause mild illnesses like a cold, to more serious illnesses like pneumonia.
- A novel (new) coronavirus is a type of coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans.
- 2019 novel coronavirus is a new type of coronavirus identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness (which affects breathing) called COVID-19.
- COVID-19 infections have now been reported in many countries including the United States. For an updated list of affected areas, visit cdc.gov/coronavirus.

What are the Symptoms of Coronavirus?

- Commonly reported symptoms include fever, cough or shortness of breath.
- Most people with COVID-19 will have mild symptoms. People who are at most risk for severe illness are those who have other health conditions, including chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or a weakened immune system.

How Does Coronavirus Spread?

- The virus is likely to be spread from person to person between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Who is Most at Risk for Coronavirus?

- People who are at most risk for severe illness are elderly or have other health conditions such as chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes or a weakened immune system.

How Can I Protect Myself and Others from Coronavirus?

- 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.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when sneezing or coughing. Do not use your hands.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do not shake hands. Instead wave or elbow bump.
- Monitor your health more closely than usual for cold or flu symptoms.
- Get the flu shot. Although the flu shot will not protect you from COVID-19, it will help prevent the flu which has similar symptoms to this coronavirus.

What Should I do if I Feel Sick?

- Stay home and call your doctor if you have cold or flu symptoms like coughing, shortness of breath, fever or sore throat.
- If you do not feel better in 24-48 hours, seek care from your doctor.
- Avoid going out in public. Do not go 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.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. 3.8.20
If you need help getting medical care, call 311. NYC will provide care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay. Hospital staff will not ask about immigration status. Receiving health care is not a public benefit identified by the public charge test.

Is it Safe to Attend Large Gatherings?

- If you are sick, stay home.
- If you have chronic lung disease, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, or a weakened immune system, avoid unnecessary events and gatherings.
- If you have no symptoms, it is okay to go to events, but practice good hygiene and remain vigilant about your health.
- Right now, no large events or public gatherings are cancelled but we are monitoring developments and will adjust as needed.

What Else Can I Do?

- Help reduce overcrowding.
- Consider telecommuting where possible. Private-sector employers should consider allowing employees to telecommute if the job allows.
- The City is also asking private-sector employers to consider staggered work hours. For example, instead of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., consider changing some work hours to 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. or 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Walk or bike to work, if you can.
- When taking the subway, if the train is too packed, be patient and wait for the next one.
- If you have family or friends who have a chronic health condition, do not visit them if you feel sick.

What Should I Do about Harassment or Discrimination Related to Coronavirus?

- It is important to separate facts from fear and guard against stigma. A lot of information circulating about coronavirus on social media and in some news reporting is not based in the facts.
- Support your friends, neighbors and colleagues by sharing this fact sheet to counter misinformation. Obtain information from trusted sources like the NYC Health Department.
- If you are being harassed due to your race, nation of origin or other identities, call 311 to report discrimination or harassment to the NYC Commission on Human Rights.
- If you are experiencing stress or feeling 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.

Where Can I Get More Information?

- For real-time updates, text COVID to 692-692. Messages and data rates may apply. Check your wireless provider plan for details.
- Visit nyc.gov/coronavirus for additional resources and information.

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FURTHER COVID-19 INFORMATION RESOURCES

Centers for Disease Control:

New York State Department of Health:

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:
https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/coronavirus.page

World Health Organization:
https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019