

COVID-19 FAQs

WHAT IS COVID-19 OR THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus strain spreading from person-to-person. The virus originated in China but is currently spreading in the United States and other countries. While most cases of illness are mild, health experts are concerned because this virus has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CORONAVIRUS?

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, or trouble breathing. These symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after being exposed to the virus.

HOW SEVERE IS CORONAVIRUS?

Most cases of coronavirus illness are mild and do not require hospital care. A small percentage of people get severely ill with lung and breathing problems, like pneumonia. Older adults and persons with underlying medical conditions are at highest risk.

HOW DOES CORONAVIRUS SPREAD?

Currently, the virus is thought to spread:

- Through respiratory droplets when an ill person coughs or sneezes
- Touching objects or surfaces contaminated with the virus and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes
- Close contact with ill persons (within about 6 feet)

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM CORONAVIRUS?

Everyone has a role to play in preventing the spread of illness, especially to protect people who are most at risk. Taking these steps will also prevent the spread of flu and the common cold:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home if you are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects

If you are traveling, follow the CDC's guidance:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

WHEN SHOULD I SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION?

If you have symptoms of fever, cough, or shortness of breath **OR** you recently traveled to a country experiencing novel coronavirus, call the NM Department of Health at 855-600-3453.

The New Mexico Department of Health is the lead agency for the statewide coronavirus response. Community members are encouraged to visit <https://cv.nmhealth.org> and follow the NMDOH on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or [Twitter](#) for the latest information.