

# CORONAVIRUS FACT SHEET



## What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19.

## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

## How is COVID-19 spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets.

## What can I do to protect myself and prevent the spread of the disease?



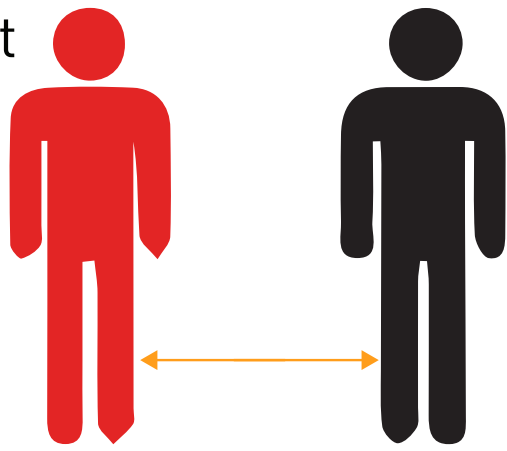
Protection measures for everyone:

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol or hand wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

**Why?** Washing hands kills any viruses that may be on your hands.

- Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing; do not drink from someone else's glass and do not share a hug.

**Why?** By staying far from someone who is coughing or sneezing, you reduce the chances of breathing in the droplets including the COVID-19 virus in case that person has the disease.



- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.

**Why?** Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.

- Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

**Why?** Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

- Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

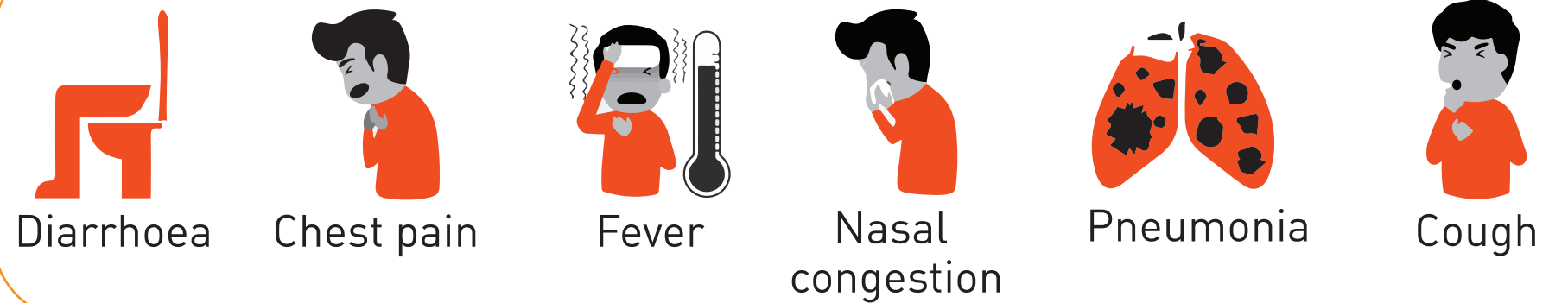
**Why?** National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.



- Keep up to date on the latest COVID-19 hotspots (cities or local areas where COVID-19 is spreading widely). If possible, avoid traveling to places – especially if you are an older person or have diabetes, heart or lung disease.

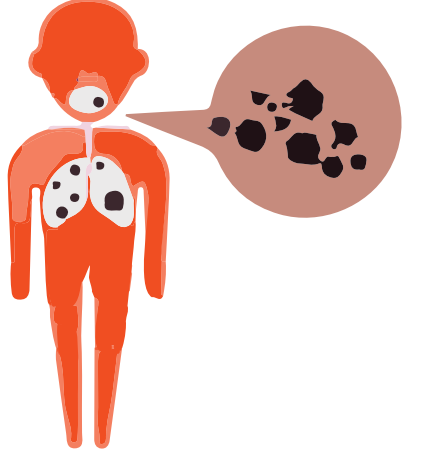
**Why?** You have a higher chance of catching COVID-19 in one of these areas.

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?



## How long is the incubation period for COVID-19?

The "incubation period" means the time between catching the virus and beginning to have symptoms of the disease. Most estimates of the incubation period for COVID-19 range between 1-14 days, most commonly around five days. These estimates will be updated as more data becomes available.



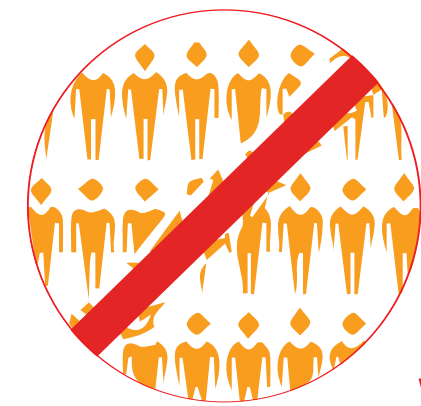
## Protection measures for persons who are in or have recently visited (past 14 days) areas where COVID-19 is spreading



- Follow the guidance outlined above (Protection measures for everyone).
- Self-isolate by staying at home if you begin to feel unwell, even with mild symptoms such as headache, low grade fever (37.3 C or above) and slight runny nose, until you recover. If it is essential for you to have someone bring you supplies or to go

out, e.g. to buy food, then wear a mask to avoid infecting other people.

**Why?** Avoiding contact with others and visits to medical facilities will allow these facilities to operate more effectively and help protect you and others from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.



- If you develop fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical advice promptly as this may be due to a respiratory infection or other serious conditions. Call in advance and tell your provider of any recent travel or contact with travellers.

**Why?** Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also help to prevent possible spread of COVID-19 and other viruses.



## Are there any medicines or therapies that can prevent or cure COVID-19?

While some western, traditional or home remedies may provide comfort and alleviate symptoms of COVID-19, there is no evidence that current medicine can prevent or cure the disease. World Health Organisation (WHO) does not recommend self-medication with any medicines, including antibiotics, as a prevention or cure for COVID-19. However, there are several ongoing clinical trials that include both western and traditional medicines. WHO will continue to provide updated information as soon as clinical findings are available.



## How long does the virus survive on surfaces?



It is not certain how long the virus that causes COVID-19 survives on surfaces, but it seems to behave like other coronaviruses. Studies suggest that coronaviruses (including preliminary information on the COVID-19 virus) may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. This may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment).

## Should I wear a mask to protect myself?

Only wear a mask if you are ill with COVID-19 symptoms (especially coughing) or looking after someone who may have COVID-19. Note that disposable face mask can only be used ONCE at a time. If you are not ill or looking after someone who is ill then you are wasting a mask.

The most effective ways to protect yourself and others against COVID-19 are to frequently clean your hands, cover your cough with the bend of elbow or tissue and maintain a distance of at least 1 meter (3 feet) from people who are coughing or sneezing.

