

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Just the Facts



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
METROPOLITAN HEALTH DISTRICT

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people and can spread from person-to-person. This virus was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

The COVID-19 is spreading person-to-person in China and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time this virus is NOT spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have travel to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contact of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example healthcare workers and close contact of people who are infected with COVID-19. Public health continues to closely monitor the situation.

Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in San Antonio:

On February 13, 2020, the CDC, Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District confirmed the first case of the COVID-19 virus (2019-nCoV, previously known as novel coronavirus) in Bexar County. The patient who was under a federal quarantine order at Lackland Air Force Base recently returned from Wuhan, China, where an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by this novel coronavirus has been ongoing since December 2019. The current count of cases of infection with COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>

How does COVID-19 spread?

This virus probably originally emerged from an animal source but now seems to be spreading from person-to-person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some viruses are highly contagious (like measles), while other viruses are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

Are there severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.

These include:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should get medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus and take precautions listed above.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.