



What You Need to Know About COVID-19

Novel Coronavirus

- Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause mild illnesses like a cold, to more serious illnesses like pneumonia.
- Infections with this new virus have been reported in many countries, including the U.S. For an updated list of affected areas, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).
- The virus is likely to be spread from person to person, but it is currently unclear how easily it spreads.
- Commonly reported symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.
- Most people (80%) with COVID-19 will feel like they have a bad cold or the flu. Some people will require hospitalization. People who are at most risk for severe illness are elderly or have other health conditions.

What should New Yorkers do?

New Yorkers should go about their daily lives, but take certain precautions:

- Get the flu shot—it's not too late. Although the flu shot will not protect you from COVID-19, it will help prevent the flu which has similar symptoms to this coronavirus.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands).
- 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.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- If you feel sick, stay home.
- If you have fever, cough and/or shortness of breath, and recently traveled to an area with [ongoing spread of coronavirus](#), or have been in close contact with someone who has recently traveled to any of those areas, go to your doctor.
- If you have these symptoms, but no travel history, stay home and call your doctor.
 - If you need connection to a health care provider, call 311.
 - Hospital staff will not ask about immigration status. Receiving health care is not a public benefit identified by the public charge test.

At this time, New Yorkers **do not** need to:

- Limit travel within the city.
- Avoid public gatherings and public transportation.
- Change anything about where you get your food or how you prepare it.
- Wear a face mask if you are not sick. Face masks are only recommended if directed by a health care provider.
 - People wear protective face masks for many reasons, including seasonal allergies, pollution or protecting those around them from a common cold. They should **not** be harassed or targeted for wearing one.

This is a rapidly changing situation. Please check [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) for the latest updates.

What can international travelers do to protect themselves?

- Avoid nonessential travel to affected areas. Visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers) for the latest travel health notices.
- If you were recently outside of the U.S and do not have a fever, cough and/or shortness of breath go about your daily life but monitor yourself for these symptoms. If they develop go to your doctor.
- If you were recently outside of the U.S. and have a fever, cough and/or shortness of breath, go to your doctor.
- If your doctor asks you to stay home:
 - Avoid going in public, 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.
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve, not with your hands.
 - 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.

It is important that we separate facts from fear and guard against stigma.

A lot of information circulating about coronavirus on social media and even in some news reporting is not based in the facts. Support your friends, neighbors and colleagues by proactively sharing this message and countering misinformation. Obtain information about COVID-19 from trusted sources like the NYC Health Department, the CDC, and the World Health Organization (WHO).

If you are being harassed due to your race, nation of origin or other identities, you can report discrimination or harassment to the NYC Commission on Human Rights by calling **311** and saying “human rights.”

If you are experiencing stress or feel 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.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

This is a rapidly changing situation. Please check [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) for the latest updates.

Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) General Disinfection Guidance for Businesses and Non-Healthcare Settings

This guidance is provided “as is” for informational purposes only. The NYC Health Department does not provide any warranties of any kind regarding the information contained within.

This document provides businesses and other non-healthcare settings in the private sector with guidance for staff who perform general cleaning and disinfection. Employers should ensure that staff take extra effort with daily cleaning practices as New York City prepares for possible person-to-person transmission of COVID-19. This guidance is not intended for staff who perform cleaning in healthcare settings.

2019 Novel Coronavirus

Health officials are still learning about the spread and severity a novel (new) coronavirus. The infection, called COVID-19, can be spread from person to person. However, the health risk to non-healthcare workers is considered low based on the current available information. This may change in the weeks to months ahead.

Separate Facts from Fear and Guard Against Stigma

A lot of information about coronavirus on social media and even in some news reports is not based on facts. Businesses and non-healthcare settings can help prevent the stigmatization or targeting of one group of people by proactively sharing the messages found in this document. The outbreak is absolutely no excuse to spread racism and discrimination. Businesses should encourage that staff stay informed, remain vigilant and take care of each other. For more information, visit nyc.gov/coronavirus.

General Disinfection Guidance

Businesses should follow these guidelines:

- Staff should wear and use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) according to existing policies and procedures.
- Have soap and paper towels in bathrooms at all times. Additionally, custodian and facilities staff should ensure that all handwashing sinks are in a state of good repair.
- Put alcohol-based hand sanitizers in common areas to encourage hand hygiene.
- Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces in common areas and bathrooms. Frequently contacted items, such as drinking fountains, faucet handles, door hardware, push plates and light switches, are to be wiped down regularly with cleaners.
- When cleaning vehicles, staff should pay special attention to disinfecting surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as door handles, arm rests, and seatbelts, as appropriate.
- Use regular cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., Clorox, Purell, and Peroxide products). A full list of cleaners can be found here: <https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf>.
 - Cleaning and disinfectant products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are recommended for use against COVID-19. These products can be identified by the following claim: “[Product name] has demonstrated effectiveness against viruses similar to COVID-19 on hard non-porous surfaces. Therefore, this product can be used against COVID-19 when used in accordance with the directions for use against [name of supporting virus] on hard, non-porous surfaces.”

- This claim or a similar claim, will be made only through the following communications: technical literature distributed exclusively to health care facilities, physicians, nurses and public health officials, “1-800” consumer information services, social media sites and company websites (non-label related). Specific claims for “COVID-19” **will not** appear on the product or master label. If there are no available EPA-registered products that have an approved emerging viral pathogen claim for COVID-19, products with label claims against human coronaviruses should be used according to label instructions.
- See [additional information about EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims](#).
- Working windows and both supply and exhaust ventilation systems should be checked for proper operation. Windows are to be kept open where practical and HVAC equipment is to be operated with maximum airflow to ventilate and “air purge” buildings.
- For more information, employers can refer to CDC’s Interim Guidance here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>

General Infection Prevention Strategies

Good personal hygiene practices remain the best method for preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Businesses should encourage staff do the following to prevent infection:

- Stay home if sick
- Cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue, shirt sleeve, or bent arm, not their hands
- Wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water are not available
- Avoid touching their face with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Get the flu shot - although the flu shot will not protect from COVID-19, it will help prevent the flu which has similar symptoms to this coronavirus

About Face Masks

The New York City Health Department does not recommend the routine use of face masks if you are not sick. Face masks are not needed for general or routine tasks by staff – even those who have frequent interaction with the public. It is important to note that people wear face masks for many reasons, including seasonal allergies, pollution or to protect others from a common cold. In addition, some staff may be required to use either face masks or N95 respirators per organization’s protocol for reasons unrelated to the current COVID-19 outbreak. If so, such staff should use face masks or N95 respirators as usual. No coronavirus-specific precautions are recommended for interactions with the general public, including people showing no symptoms who have visited affected parts of the world.

Information about Medical Care for Staff

- Staff with symptoms (fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath), should stay home and call their doctor and tell them about any travel history.
- If staff do not have a doctor or health insurance, they can visit an NYC Health + Hospitals facility. To find healthcare: nychealthandhospitals.org/hospitals or call 311
- Hospital staff will not ask about immigration status
- Receiving health care is not a public benefit by the public charge rule
- Strict laws protect patient confidentiality

New Yorkers, here's what YOU need to know about the coronavirus



You can prevent the spread of any virus by staying home if you feel sick, covering your sneezes and coughs with your sleeve (not your hands) and washing your hands often.



If you feel flu-like symptoms (fever, cough and shortness of breath), and recently traveled to an area affected by coronavirus, or have been in close contact with someone who has, go to your doctor. If you have symptoms but no travel history, stay home and call your doctor. If you need connection to a medical professional, call 311.



If you're feeling well, no need to wear a face mask - and don't worry if someone else does. People wear masks for many reasons - be respectful.

Check www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus for updates and other helpful information.

