

# Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)

## What you need to know

You may be feeling concerned about the coronavirus, also referred to as COVID-19. If so, you're not alone. Here are frequently asked questions with the latest information and advice to help you feel prepared.

### What is coronavirus?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a type of virus that causes respiratory illness – an infection of the airways and lungs.

### What are the symptoms?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, or shortness of breath – similar to the flu.

### How does it spread?

The virus is thought to spread person to person – mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through tiny droplets made when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

### How can I protect myself and my loved ones?

Some people are more vulnerable to the virus, including older adults and people with chronic conditions. But everyone should take steps to protect themselves.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly for at least 20 seconds. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you're sick (except to get medical care). Keep sick children home from school.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow. Wash your hands afterwards.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

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## What should I do if I think I have symptoms?

If you develop symptoms (fever, cough, trouble breathing) or you believe you've been exposed, it's important to call us first so we can direct you to the most appropriate care.

Call the advice number on your Kaiser Permanente membership card to speak with a licensed care provider or to schedule a telephone or video appointment with your doctor.

If you don't have your membership card with you, visit [kp.org/getcare](https://kp.org/getcare) and click on "24/7 advice."

## How is Kaiser Permanente responding?

We're committed to the health and safety of our members, patients, employees, and doctors. We have been working on confronting highly infectious diseases for years, and we're confident we can safely treat patients who have been infected with this virus, with very little risk to our other patients, members, and employees.

We're prepared to have our patients tested for the coronavirus (COVID-19). If testing is warranted, we'll make the appropriate arrangements. Rest assured that your health is our top priority.



For more information, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov) for the latest coronavirus information.