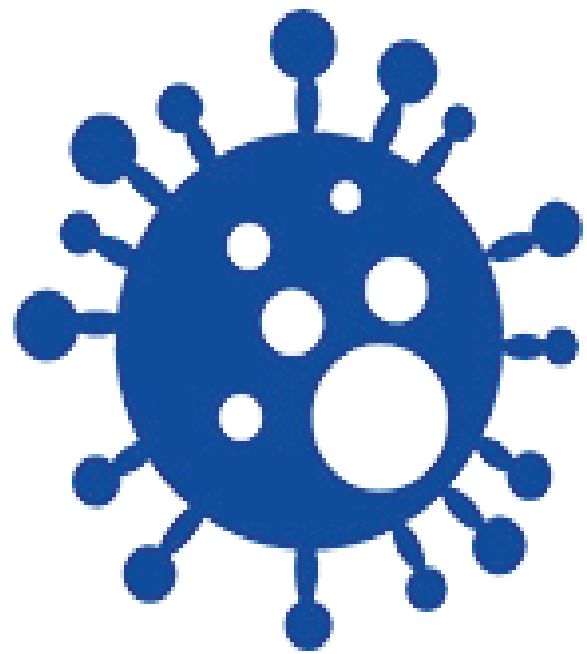


Questions on Corona, answered



How does Covid-19 transmit?

The main mode of human-to-human transmission is via respiratory droplets (generated through coughing, sneezing):

- Transmission primarily occurs by breathing in, or having one's mouth/nose directly exposed to, respiratory droplets from a nearby (<1 meter) person with COVID-19.
- Recent evidence shows that COVID-19 patients shed virus early in the disease course and suggests transmission potential of asymptomatic/minimally symptomatic patients.
- Based on currently available data, the people who have symptoms (coughing and sneezing) are causing the majority of virus spread.
- Indirect transmission is also possible, via touching surfaces contaminated with respiratory droplets from a person with COVID-19, then touching one's own mouth, nose or eyes.

Are antibiotics effective in preventing and treating the new coronavirus?

No, antibiotics do not work against viruses, only bacteria. The new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a virus and, therefore, antibiotics should not be used as a means of prevention or treatment. However, if you are hospitalized for the 2019-nCoV, you may receive antibiotics because bacterial co-infection is possible.

What are the common signs and symptoms?

Common signs of COVID-19 include fever, cough and other respiratory symptoms. In more severe cases, it can cause pneumonia, severe illness and death in some patients (WHO). Some patients also present with muscle aches, confusion, headache, and there have been a few reports of diarrhea. Given the similarity with flu and other respiratory diseases, differential diagnosis needs to be supported by laboratory.

What is needed to contain the spread and outbreak?

Effective control of a novel coronavirus outbreak requires rapid identification and source control, appropriate risk communication and community engagement, and rigorous infection prevention and control practices. Early recognition requires at-risk communities being informed of when and where to seek care, maintaining a high level of clinical suspicion by health care workers, and timely testing.

Does the new coronavirus affect older people, or are younger people also susceptible?

People of all ages can be infected by the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus. WHO advises people of all ages to take steps to protect themselves from the virus, for example by following good hand hygiene and good respiratory hygiene.

How can individuals protect themselves from COVID-19?

Stay aware of the latest information on the outbreak (communication from local/national authorities);

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Cover mouth and nose with fixed elbow or tissue when coughing and sneezing, and throw tissue into closed bin immediately after use;
- Avoid close contact when experiencing cough and fever;
- Avoid contact with sick animals, spoiled meat, waste and fluids in wet markets;
- Practice food safety;
- Seek medical care early if experiencing fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and share previous travel history with the health care provider, or history of close contact with someone who has traveled to an area where COVID-19 been reported.

Are there any specific medicines to prevent or treat the new coronavirus?

To date, there is no specific medicine recommended to prevent or treat the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV). However, those infected with the virus should receive appropriate care to relieve and treat symptoms, and those with severe illness should receive optimized supportive care. Some specific treatments are under investigation, and will be tested through clinical trials.

Are there differences between symptoms caused by the flu and COVID-19?

Cough and cold could mean an allergy. A fever with cough and cold is a symptom of the flu. When you have fever with cough which is complicated by breathlessness, it is a symptom of Coronavirus infection and you must call your doctor to rule it out.

Will wearing masks prevent the spreading of Coronavirus?

For common people, it is not necessary to wear masks. Only people infected with COVID-19 and healthcare professionals, who are in contact with such infected patients, need to use masks. The rest need not wear. If you are travelling to places where the probability of catching the infection is high, say hospitals, you need to wear masks. If you are using public transport system, where you cannot know if somebody will sneeze or cough, you can use a mask.

Should people avoid eating meat based food to prevent transmission?

Eating meat has nothing to do with Coronavirus. It is a respiratory virus and not a food-borne one. Coronavirus has nothing to do with food or pet animals or eating chicken and mutton. People can eat whatever they want and how much ever they want.

How effective are thermal scanners in detecting people infected with the new coronavirus?

Thermal scanners are effective in detecting people who have developed a fever (i.e. have a higher than normal body temperature) because of infection with the new coronavirus. However, they cannot detect people who are infected but are not yet sick with fever. This is because it takes between 2 and 10 days before people who are infected become sick and develop a fever.

Can spraying alcohol or chlorine all over your body kill the new coronavirus?

No. Spraying alcohol or chlorine all over your body will not kill viruses that have already entered your body. Spraying such substances can be harmful to clothes or mucous membranes (i.e. eyes, mouth). Be aware that both alcohol and chlorine can be useful to disinfect surfaces, but they need to be used under appropriate recommendations.

How soon can a vaccine be developed for COVID-19?

A vaccine for COVID-19 is likely to be developed in a year because the trials are on at the moment. Like H1N1, a vaccine can be developed for COVID-19 too. In general, it takes at least a year for any vaccine to be developed.

Is there a link between a person's immunity and COVID-19 transmission? Is this curable?

Coronavirus is one of the weakest family of viruses. The deaths caused so far or people affected could have been ones with less immunity like children or the elderly. It does not affect everybody. Yes, 100% immunocompromised people like those with HIV, people with cancer, those who have undergone transplant surgeries or people with diabetes are at risk. Children and elderly are at risk as well. If you take the history of all who died in China or Iran, 90% of them would have been suffering from an illness that compromises their immunity. The average age of virus death is 59. The mortality rate for people aged 60 and above after contracting a viral infection is 3.4%; above 70 years is 8% and 80 and above is 15%. Generally, if the immunity is good, you can tolerate any viral infection but there is no specific evidence as it pertains to COVID-19.

If I have symptoms of COVID-19 virus, should I approach the hospital directly?

You are not supposed to visit a hospital directly. Please call 104 for information about meeting a doctor.

Do vaccines against pneumonia protect you against the new coronavirus?

No. Vaccines against pneumonia, such as pneumococcal vaccine and Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib) vaccine, do not provide protection against the new coronavirus. The virus is so new and different that it needs its own vaccine. Researchers are trying to develop a vaccine against Covid-19.

Can eating garlic help prevent infection with the new coronavirus?

Garlic is a healthy food that may have some antimicrobial properties. However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic has protected people from the new coronavirus.

Are there any home remedies to treat COVID-19?

Home remedies and treatment other than allopathy is not proven science. The best thing is precaution only. Can COVID-19 virus be transmitted in areas with hot and humid climates? From the evidence so far, the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted in ALL AREAS, including areas with hot and humid weather. Regardless of climate, adopt protective measures if you live in, or travel to an area reporting COVID-19.

Does taking a hot bath prevent the coronavirus disease?

Taking a hot bath will not prevent you from catching COVID-19. Your normal body temperature remains around 36.5°C to 37°C, regardless of the temperature of your bath or shower. Actually, taking a hot bath with extremely hot water can be harmful, as it can burn you.

Can the new coronavirus be transmitted through mosquito bites?

To date there has been no information nor evidence to suggest that the new coronavirus could be transmitted by mosquitoes. The new coronavirus is a respiratory virus which spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose.

Can regularly rinsing your nose with saline help prevent infection with the new coronavirus?

No. There is no evidence that regularly rinsing the nose with saline has protected people from infection with the new coronavirus.

