

# CORONAVIRUS & COVID-19: PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

LAST UPDATED: 3/30/20

The novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and the disease it causes (COVID-19) are now a global pandemic, and the virus continues to spread across the U.S. and Canada. **It's critical that everyone does their part to limit the spread of the virus, as people without symptoms or with mild symptoms can still spread the virus to others.**

## Risk in the U.S. and Canada

- ▶ Current risk of contracting COVID-19 in the U.S. and Canada varies by community based on the extent of the outbreak and the success of mitigation efforts.
- ▶ While the majority of people who contract COVID-19 will experience only mild symptoms, the disease does bring risk for serious and life-threatening health conditions. **Even people at low risk for serious health complications should take steps to protect groups who would be at higher risk if they got the disease.**
- ▶ Risk for more serious health effects is highest among:
  - Older adults (age 60 and up)
  - People with underlying health conditions (e.g., heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, cancer)
  - People with weakened immune systems
- ▶ The majority of deaths caused by COVID-19 have occurred among people falling into at least one of these higher risk categories.

## Transmission & Diagnosis

- ▶ **Transmission:** spread primarily through airborne respiratory droplets during coughing and sneezing. Being in close proximity (less than six feet) to an infected person, especially in enclosed spaces, may result in transmission. Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands, or touching an object with the virus on it, followed by touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands can spread the virus.
- ▶ **Diagnosis:** If you suspect you have COVID-19, call your healthcare provider. A lab test may be performed and sent to the CDC.

## Signs, Symptoms & Treatment

- ▶ **Incubation:** It takes between 2-14 days for symptoms to appear after exposure. During this time period, people are contagious and able to pass on the virus. The average onset of symptoms is around 5 days.
- ▶ **Symptoms:** Mild to moderate respiratory symptoms similar to the flu may include fever, cough and shortness of breath. In serious cases, these symptoms progress to pneumonia and other life-threatening respiratory conditions.
- ▶ **Treatment:** There is currently no vaccine for COVID-19 and no specific treatment beyond those typically prescribed for seasonal flu. If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected, focus on supportive care to relieve symptoms. Do the following to help prevent the disease from spreading:
  - Stay home except to get medical care. Don't go to work, school or public areas and avoid public transportation. **If possible, self-quarantine for at least 14 days after the onset of symptoms to prevent spreading the virus to others.**
  - Wear a surgical mask when around other people or when visiting a health care provider.
  - Call ahead before visiting your doctor so the office can take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
  - Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day with a household cleaning spray or wipe.
  - Avoid sharing personal household items like drinking glasses, utensils or bedding. Wash these items thoroughly with soap and water after use.
  - Seek medical attention if your conditions worsen (e.g., difficulty breathing).
- ▶ Employers should encourage sick workers to stay home or use available telework options. Employers should consider the feasibility of allowing workers who are sick or suspected of being sick to stay home without punitive measures such as loss of pay.

## Preventing & Limiting the Spread of the Virus: Protect Yourself and Others

- ▶ Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol when soap and water aren't available.
- ▶ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- ▶ Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- ▶ Clean "high-touch" surfaces every day with a household cleaning spray or wipe.
- ▶ Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, stay home. If you must go out in public, do your best to avoid close contact with other people.
- ▶ Practice social distancing by limiting person-to-person contact within six feet, especially in large groups or in enclosed spaces.
- ▶ Follow orders, guidance and recommendations from federal and state agencies. Examples include respecting requests to stay indoors, practicing social distancing and avoiding non-essential travel.



## Preventing & Limiting the Spread of the Virus: Frontline Workers

In addition to the guidelines above, workers who may come in contact with infected persons, such as healthcare workers, should take additional precautions. In addition to the steps above, these workers should:

- ▶ Wear personal protective equipment (PPE). This includes N95 respirators, gloves, gowns and eye protection.
- ▶ Be trained on safe donning, doffing and disposal of PPE to avoid infectious disease transmission.
- ▶ Be medically able to wear the type of respirator needed and fit-tested to wear it. A respirator can't protect you if it doesn't fit your face.
- ▶ Be aware of the differences between surgical masks and N95s. Surgical masks do not protect the wearer from airborne respiratory droplets. **Remember: surgical masks protect others from you; N95s protect you from others.**

## Travel & Potentially Exposed Persons

- ▶ **If you are sick or suspect you have the virus, do not travel.**
- ▶ Policies regarding domestic and international travel are changing rapidly; take this into consideration before traveling. Avoid non-essential travel on commercial airlines, trains and buses for work or personal use.
- ▶ Consider alternate options such as video conference calls when possible. Consider the importance of attending events in person versus the risk, and act accordingly.
- ▶ **On March 30, 2020, the federal government extended existing nationwide social distancing guidelines until April 30th, 2020.**

**COVID-19 PROTECTION: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SURGICAL MASKS, PAPER MASKS AND N95S**

**Surgical Mask**

**Intended Use and Purpose**  
Provides a protective barrier against large droplets, splashes or sprays of bodily fluids. Protects others from the wearer's respiratory emissions.

**Face Seal Fit**  
Loose-fitting

**Fit-Testing Requirement**  
No

**Filtration**  
Does **NOT** provide the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles and is **NOT** considered respiratory protection.

**Paper Mask**

**Intended Use and Purpose**  
Can be worn for comfort against non-toxic nuisance dusts during activities like mowing, sweeping and dusting. These masks are **NOT** respirators and do **NOT** offer protection against hazardous dusts, gases or vapors.

**Face Seal Fit**  
Loose-fitting and many only have one strap.

**Fit-Testing Requirement**  
No

**Filtration**  
These masks are **NOT** NIOSH-approved disposable filtering facepieces. Does **NOT** provide the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles and is **NOT** considered respiratory protection.

**N95 Mask**

**Intended Use and Purpose**  
Reduces wearer's exposure to particles including small particle aerosols and large droplets (only non-oil aerosols).

**Face Seal Fit**  
Tight-fitting

**Fit-Testing Requirement**  
Yes

**Filtration**  
Filters out at least 95% of airborne particles, including large and small particles. Provides the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles and is considered respiratory protection.

**Construction N95**

**Surgical N95**

## Additional Resources

For more information on guidance for employers and workers, household preparation, dealing with mental health impacts and other topics related to the novel coronavirus and COVID-19, visit the Fund's homepage or our Coronavirus & COVID-19 Resource page at [www.lhsfna.org/index.cfm/coronavirus/](http://www.lhsfna.org/index.cfm/coronavirus/). For specific questions not covered above, contact the Fund at 202-628-5465 or by email at [communications@lhsfna.org](mailto:communications@lhsfna.org).

CDC: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html)

WHO: [www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)

OSHA: [www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/index.html)