



# What you need to know about the COVID-19

## What is novel coronavirus?

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness, COVID-19, caused by a novel (new) coronavirus. This virus was first detected in China in December 2019; it spreads from person-to-person and has the potential to cause severe illness and uncommonly death. Four well-known strains of coronaviruses regularly circulate in human populations globally and are a frequent cause of upper respiratory infections; COVID-19 is new so it's called the novel coronavirus.

## How do coronaviruses spread?

There are still many things that are unknown about this new virus. At this time, spread of the virus is believed to happen in the following ways:

- When an infected person coughs or sneezes next to others
- Through close contact (e.g., hugging, kissing, shaking hands)
- Possibly by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching the mouth, nose, or possibly eyes

## How severe is COVID-19?

Reported cases have ranged from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia and uncommonly death. Persons at increased risk for severe illness include older adults and persons with underlying medical conditions.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms are likely to appear 2–14 days after exposure, and include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.



FEVER



COUGH



SHORTNESS OF BREATH

## What is the current travel guidance from CDC?

See [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel) for the latest travel guidance from the CDC for recommendations for travel.

## How can I prevent contracting or spreading respiratory infections?

Steps you can take to prevent contracting flu and the common cold will also help prevent contracting the COVID-19:

- Wash hands often with soap and water; if not available, use hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- If you're sick, stay home and avoid close contact with others and cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing

***There is no vaccine currently available to prevent COVID-19 infections.***

For more information, contact the Alaska Section of Epidemiology: 907-269-8000 or after hours 800-478-0084.