



How to protect yourself from Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Follow these simple precautions to reduce your chances of contracting Coronavirus (COVID-19):

Know the symptoms for the 2019 novel coronavirus

The symptoms of infection are often similar to those of other respiratory virus infections, such as influenza. Symptoms can include fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Most people will have only mild symptoms, but some can become very sick. People who are at most risk for severe illness are the elderly or persons that have other health conditions.

If you think you may have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 and have symptoms, call ahead to your healthcare professional BEFORE going to the office, urgent care center or emergency room. Many providers have a virtual care platform, telehealth or telemedicine, so that a patient can meet with a healthcare professional by video conference or telephone. Depending on the severity of your symptoms, your provider can determine whether or not you need to be evaluated in person. Avoid contact with others, and if you need to leave your home when sick, put on a face mask or cover your mouth and nose with a scarf or bandanna.

Keep things clean

Prevention is the first line of defense, make good hygiene a routine and follow these CDC recommendations:

- ✓ Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol), especially after using the bathroom, riding mass transit, before eating and after a cough/sneeze.
- ✓ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ✓ Avoid close contact with people who are showing symptoms of illness.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces with a bleach disinfectants.
- ✓ Stay home when you are sick.
- ✓ Cover your cough/sneeze with a tissue, or cough/sneeze into your elbow, rather than into your hands. Be sure to wash your hands (and throw out the tissue).
- ✓ Social distancing - avoid large gatherings and crowds. Stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- ✓ Take an annual influenza vaccine (still available).

What about face masks?

The CDC does not currently recommend the use of face masks among the general public. Face masks are worn by healthcare providers and are used by people who are sick and may be around other people to help prevent the spread of disease to others.

Plan your travel accordingly

The CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to certain areas. The information changes frequently so keep up to date at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>. Use your discretion should you travel, avoiding long airplane flights or cruises.

What is Columbia University doing?

Out of an abundance of caution and to employ social distancing, President Bollinger announced that classes moved to an online format and advised our community to reduce or eliminate large gatherings and meetings. Officials continue to work with health authorities regarding additional preventive steps to be taken for mitigation.

**Where can I get more information?**

Information can be found

- University Preparedness <https://preparedness.columbia.edu/>
- Morningside COVID-19 <https://www.columbia.edu/content/coronavirus>
 - Morningside Medical Services hotline 9am-5pm Monday-Friday, 212-854-9355
- CUIMC COVID-19 <https://www.cuimc.columbia.edu/coronavirus-information>
 - Workforce Health & Safety hotline 6 am-11 pm, 7 days a week, (646)697-9470
 - New York Presbyterian Hospital hotline staffed by PAs (646)697-4000
- Research at Columbia FAQs <https://research.columbia.edu/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions-relating-research>
- NYC DOHMH <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/coronavirus.page> CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>
- WHO <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>