

Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

The typical symptoms of COVID-19 are fever and a cough that may progress to pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties

A cluster of cases of pneumonia that occurred in Wuhan, Hubei Province China during December 2019, were confirmed in early January 2020 as caused by a novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). SARS-CoV2 may have originated from an unknown animal source, but is mainly transmitted from human to human by respiratory droplets. National and international spread of this virus has resulted in COVID-19 cases being reported worldwide.

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of a new continuous cough and/or a high temperature. Symptoms range from mild to life threatening. Most cases report a mild illness, but some individuals will develop pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. Those who are elderly or have pre-existing health issues are more likely to develop severe disease.

Prevention

COVID-19 is transmitted through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes and direct or indirect contact with these secretions. In addition to respiratory secretions, other coronaviruses have been detected in blood, faeces and urine.

To reduce the risk of coronavirus infection all travellers should:

- Maintain good hand and personal hygiene. [Wash hands regularly](#) with soap and water or alcohol based disinfectant gel before handling or consuming food.
- Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms, or who appears unwell.
- Avoid sharing personal items.
- Follow guidelines on social distancing measures which may be in place.

To reduce the risk of passing coronavirus to others, anyone with respiratory symptoms should:

- Cover the nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with a tissue or flexed elbow.
- Use paper tissues only once and dispose of them carefully, then clean hands with soap and water or alcohol based disinfectant gel.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home and work environment.
- Should a mask be worn, all the recommended precautions in order to minimise the risk of transmission should still be used.

There is currently no preventive vaccine or specific treatment for COVID-19. Medical care aims to relieve and treat the symptoms. [Guidance on infection prevention and control](#) for health care providers can be found on Public Health England's (PHE) website.

Travellers currently in countries that are reporting cases of COVID-19 should follow local public health advice. UK travellers should also ensure they are up to date with the latest advice

from [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#) and their [country specific advisories](#) plus [PHE](#).

Those who develop symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate and follow [PHE stay at home guidance](#).

Resources

- [Public Health England: COVID-19: guidance for health professionals](#)
- [Public Health England: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) what you need to do](#)
- [World Health Organization: Coronavirus](#)
- [European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention \(ECDC\): COVID-19](#)
- [US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [NaTHNaC: COVID-19 \(coronavirus\): general advice for travellers](#)
- [BMJ Best Practice: COVID-19](#)