Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Frequently Asked Questions

What are the symptoms of the coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Are there different strains of coronavirus?

Yes, there are seven different coronaviruses known to infect humans.

- Four of the seven coronaviruses are very common, more mild (similar to the common cold), and most people will be infected with at least one of them in their lifetime. Healthcare providers test for these common coronaviruses routinely, and no public health measures are needed to address these common coronaviruses. People infected with the common coronaviruses can avoid passing them to others by covering their coughs and sneezes, cleaning their hands frequently and containing germs by staying home when ill.
- Three of the seven coronaviruses are rare and can cause more severe illness; this includes COVID-19. Testing for this virus can only be done at CDC; healthcare providers are not able to test for this virus independent of the public health department.

What is the risk of exposure to the coronavirus (COVID-19)?

The risk to the general public remains low at this time. Right now, influenza is a much more significant threat to Americans. Protect yourself from the flu:

- It’s not too late to get your flu vaccine.
- If you are sick, stay home or seek appropriate medical care.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.

What should I do if I traveled to China and feel sick with fever, cough or difficulty breathing?

Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a healthcare office, call ahead and tell them about your travel and your symptoms.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19, but people with this virus can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.
How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. There are simple, everyday actions you can take to help prevent spreading germs that cause respiratory viruses. These include:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Close contact is defined as being within approximately 6 feet, or within the room or care area, of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment (PPE). Close contact can also include caring for, living with, visiting or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case. Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (such as being coughed on) while not wearing recommended PPE.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Where can I go for the most updated information about this virus?

The CDC website and our local/state health department are the most appropriate sources for timely updates on the spread of COVID-19. As part of LifePoint Health, we also have access to UpToDate for additional information.