

What You Need to Know About COVID-19

Novel Coronavirus

- Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause mild illnesses like a cold, to more serious illnesses like pneumonia.
- Infections with this new virus have been reported in many countries, including the U.S. For an updated list of affected areas, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).
- The virus is likely to be spread from person to person, but it is currently unclear how easily it spreads.
- Commonly reported symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.
- Most people (80%) with COVID-19 will feel like they have a bad cold or the flu. Some people will require hospitalization. People who are at most risk for severe illness are elderly or have other health conditions.

What should New Yorkers do?

New Yorkers should go about their daily lives, but take certain precautions:

- Get the flu shot—it's not too late. Although the flu shot will not protect you from COVID-19, it will help prevent the flu which has similar symptoms to this coronavirus.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands).
- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- If you feel sick, stay home.
- If you have fever, cough and/or shortness of breath, and recently traveled to an area with [ongoing spread of coronavirus](#), or have been in close contact with someone who has recently traveled to any of those areas, go to your doctor.
- If you have these symptoms, but no travel history, stay home and call your doctor.
 - If you need connection to a health care provider, call 311.
 - Hospital staff will not ask about immigration status. Receiving health care is not a public benefit identified by the public charge test.

At this time, New Yorkers **do not** need to:

- Limit travel within the city.
- Avoid public gatherings and public transportation.
- Change anything about where you get your food or how you prepare it.
- Wear a face mask if you are not sick. Face masks are only recommended if directed by a health care provider.
 - People wear protective face masks for many reasons, including seasonal allergies, pollution or protecting those around them from a common cold. They should **not** be harassed or targeted for wearing one.

This is a rapidly changing situation. Please check [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) for the latest updates.

What can international travelers do to protect themselves?

- Avoid nonessential travel to affected areas. Visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers) for the latest travel health notices.
- If you were recently outside of the U.S and do not have a fever, cough and/or shortness of breath go about your daily life but monitor yourself for these symptoms. If they develop go to your doctor.
- If you were recently outside of the U.S. and have a fever, cough and/or shortness of breath, go to your doctor.
- If your doctor asks you to stay home:
 - Avoid going in public, to school or to work until you have been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of fever reducing drugs like Tylenol or ibuprofen.
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve, not with your hands.
 - Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

It is important that we separate facts from fear and guard against stigma.

A lot of information circulating about coronavirus on social media and even in some news reporting is not based in the facts. Support your friends, neighbors and colleagues by proactively sharing this message and countering misinformation. Obtain information about COVID-19 from trusted sources like the NYC Health Department, the CDC, and the World Health Organization (WHO).

If you are being harassed due to your race, nation of origin or other identities, you can report discrimination or harassment to the NYC Commission on Human Rights by calling **311** and saying “human rights.”

If you are experiencing stress or feel anxious, contact NYC Well at 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355) or text WELL to 65173. NYC Well is a confidential help line that is staffed 24/7 by trained counselors who can provide brief supportive therapy, crisis counseling, and connections to behavioral health treatment, in more than 200 languages.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

This is a rapidly changing situation. Please check [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) for the latest updates.