

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has offered the following information regarding how coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads:

Current understanding about how coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). A novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans. COVID-19 is a new disease and there is more to learn about how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

PERSON-TO-PERSON SPREAD

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- ▶ Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- ▶ Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

SPREAD FROM CONTACT WITH INFECTED SURFACES OR OBJECTS

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

CAN SOMEONE SPREAD THE VIRUS WITHOUT BEING SICK?

- ▶ People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- ▶ Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

HOW EASILY DOES THE VIRUS SPREAD?

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (spread easily), like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (“community spread”) in some affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

PREVENTION

- ▶ Encourage sick employees to stay home
- ▶ Cough and sneeze into your elbow — to keep droplets covered and away from others
- ▶ Wash hands regularly and thoroughly — especially after coughing or sneezing
- ▶ Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer before touching others, and after using community facilities or items
- ▶ Perform routine environmental cleaning of all facilities

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>