Novel Coronavirus/ COVID-19

What is novel coronavirus?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a virus strain that has only spread in people since December 2019. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

How does novel coronavirus spread?

Health experts are still learning the details about how this new coronavirus spreads. Other coronaviruses spread from an infected person to others through:

- the air by coughing and sneezing
- close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes
- in rare cases, contact with feces

Who is at risk for novel coronavirus?

Currently the risk to the general public is low. Children appear to have milder symptoms. As with influenza, people with underlying medical conditions and people over the age of 65 may be at greater risk for complications due to COVID-19.

What are the symptoms?

People who have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus:
How severe is novel coronavirus?

Most people with COVID-19 will have mild illness and will not need medical care. However, a small percentage of infected people have developed pneumonia. So far, deaths have been reported mainly in older adults who had other health conditions.

How can I avoid getting novel coronavirus?

Steps you can take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent coronavirus:

- wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others
- cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing

If you are traveling overseas follow the CDC’s guidance: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel.

Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent novel coronavirus infections.

How is novel coronavirus treated?

There are no medications specifically approved for coronavirus. Most people will experience a mild to moderate illness and will not need medical care. If you develop cold or influenza-like symptoms, such as sore throat, fever, cough, or runny nose, in most cases you should stay home and isolate yourself from other people until you are no longer ill. If you become severely ill [such as difficulty breathing or chest pain, or a fever that does not respond to over-the-counter medication] call your healthcare provider before seeking medical care.

For more information: www.doh.wa.gov/coronavirus