

WESTCHESTER COUNTY CARES

Westchester County Department of Health



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Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

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Am I likely to become infected with COVID-19?

Currently, the risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 in Westchester County remains low. There are no known confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New York State. If cases were to occur in our area, most people are likely to experience mild to moderate disease with full recovery. In addition to staying informed, you can reduce your risk of becoming infected by taking proper prevention measures similar to what is recommended to avoid the common cold and flu.

What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can cause either mild illness, such as a cold, or can make people sick with pneumonia.

What is a novel coronavirus?

A novel coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. Recently, a novel (new) coronavirus called COVID-19 was detected in thousands of people worldwide, primarily in China. Multiple cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in the U.S. and it is expected that more cases of COVID-19 will be identified in the future. For the most recent case information, visit the [CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Situation Summary webpage](#).

How is COVID-19 spread?

Many of the initial patients with COVID-19 in China had links to a large seafood and live animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. However, cases being reported at this time have been occurring through person-to-person spread. The virus is thought to spread mainly:

- 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.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The most common symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

What should I do if I (or someone I know) traveled to an area where COVID-19 is spreading?

If you recently traveled to China, or another area where COVID-19 is spreading, or have been in close contact with someone who has confirmed COVID-19 and you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should call your health care provider. **If you need to go to your doctor's office or an emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.** You should also avoid contact with others.

Who can be tested for COVID-19?

At this time, anyone who has traveled to an area where COVID-19 is spreading and does not have symptoms will not be considered for testing. The CDC has developed specific criteria for who can be tested for COVID-19. As the situation evolves, the criteria may change. For the most current testing criteria, visit the [CDC Evaluating and Reporting Persons Under Investigation \(PUI\) webpage](#).

Is there a vaccine or treatment for COVID-19?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. There is also no specific treatment for COVID-19 disease at this time. However, most people will recover on their own after resting and drinking plenty of fluids. To relieve symptoms, people with the virus can take pain and fever medication, use a room humidifier or take hot showers to help ease a sore throat and cough.

What can I do to protect myself?

You should go about your daily life, but take the same precautions that you would during cold and flu season:

- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use alcohol based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue (not your hands), then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a cleaning product that contains bleach.

Will wearing a surgical mask protect me from COVID-19?

Surgical masks do not protect the person wearing the mask from infection with COVID-19. Surgical masks should only be worn by people showing symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of disease to others. In addition, N95 respirator masks are not recommended for the general public and should only be worn by health care workers who have been properly fitted for them.

Should I travel during the COVID-19 outbreak?

If you are planning to travel, visit the [CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel webpage](#) for the latest travel advisories related to COVID-19.

Additional Resources

[Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) (CDC)

[Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#) (WHO)

NYS Department Health Covid-19 Hotline – (888) 364-3065

For More Information



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