

# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

## How Coronavirus Spreads

COVID-19 is a new disease and **we are still learning how it spreads**, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

The President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America: [15 Days to Slow the Spread](#)  [Spanish](#) 

## 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.

## 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.

## Spread from contact with contaminated 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.

## How easily the virus spreads

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, spreading continually without stopping.

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.

## Situation in U.S.

Different parts of the country are seeing different levels of COVID-19 activity. The United States nationally is in the initiation phase of the pandemic. States in which community spread is occurring are in the acceleration phase. The duration and severity of each pandemic phase can vary depending on the characteristics of the virus and the public health response.

- CDC and state and local public health laboratories are testing for the virus that causes COVID-19. View [CDC's Public Health Laboratory Testing map](#).

[View laboratory testing map.](#)

- All 50 states have reported cases of COVID-19 to CDC.
- U.S. COVID-19 cases include:
  - Imported cases in travelers
  - Cases among close contacts of a known case
  - Community-acquired cases where the source of the infection is unknown.
- Twenty-seven U.S. states are reporting some community spread of COVID-19.
- View [latest case counts, deaths](#), and a [map of states with reported cases](#).

See the [latest updates on this outbreak](#)

## More Information

- [All COVID-19 Travel Health Notices](#)