

What Are the Symptoms of COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a virus that affects the respiratory systems of mammals. The virus affects different people in different ways. Some people only have very mild or moderate symptoms and are able to recover at home without any medical help, as if they simply had a bad cold. In these mild and moderate cases, symptoms may include fever, coughing, and shortness of breath. Some people have also reported having aches and pains, a sore throat, and (rarely) diarrhea, nausea, or a runny nose, not unlike having the flu (which is also a coronavirus). Children have generally had extremely mild symptoms.

People who are over 60 or who have underlying health conditions are more likely to develop severe symptoms that do require medical intervention. In rare cases (approximately 1.4% of those infected), COVID-19 can even result in death. Emergency warning signs of a severe infection include trouble breathing, chest pain or pressure, confusion or inability to arouse, and bluish lips or face.



Symptoms typically appear between 2 and 14 days after being exposed to the virus, with the onset of illness usually occurring around day 5.

Some people become infected with COVID-19 and don't show any symptoms at all, a state known as being asymptomatic. This has been problematic because even people who do not actually become sick when infected with COVID-19 are still able to spread it to others without realizing they are doing it, and many of the people who come into contact with these asymptomatic people will become sick. The fact that there have been so many asymptomatic or only mildly sick people, combined with the virus' long incubation period has contributed to the rapid spread of the epidemic and the difficulty in stopping it. This is also one of the driving factors behind the social distancing measures that many countries have put into place.