

Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19

What is coronavirus COVID-19? While there are a number of known coronaviruses, COVID-19 is a novel or new strain believed to have been discovered in late 2019. The virus was first reported in Wuhan, China, at that time, and the first known U.S. cases were reported in Washington state. On March 11, the World Health Organization labeled COVID-19 a global pandemic. The virus is believed to spread primarily through respiratory droplets; it can lead to pneumonia.

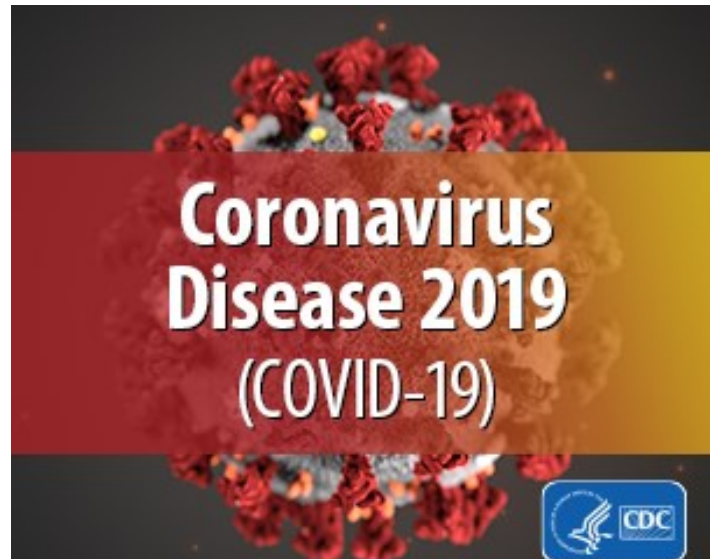
What symptoms should I watch for? People with COVID-19 have reported one or more of the following symptoms: fever, cough, difficulty breathing. Other symptoms may also be associated with the virus. If you believe you are experiencing these symptoms, you're advised to call your medical provider or the state COVID-91 hotline, 1-855-600-3453, for instructions.

Who is most at risk of getting coronavirus? People who have recently traveled internationally or domestically, particularly to known high-risk areas, and those who have had recent close contact with others who are infected with the virus are at greater risk. As the outbreak expands, the risk for infection increases.

How severe is illness caused by coronavirus? According to the CDC, the complete clinical picture is not fully known. Reported cases have ranged from very mild (including some with no reported symptoms) to severe illnesses resulting in death.

Who is most at risk for serious illness or complications? Populations that are especially vulnerable include people who are 60 or older and those who have severe chronic medical conditions such as heart, lung or kidney diseases; this includes those with diabetes or who have a compromised immune system.

What is the state doing to contain or mitigate the virus? The New Mexico Department of Health is facilitating testing of individuals with symptoms. On March 11, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham declared a statewide public health emergency authorizing emergency funding to assist agencies in delivering resources and services. The department has also ordered closing of businesses and non-profits except for those deemed essential, restricting public gatherings of five or more people unless they live together and are inside their residence (or otherwise excepted). Aside from what is allowed under the state orders, New Mexicans are directed to stay home except to maintain continuity of functions critical to health and safety. New Mexico's Public Education Department has ordered all public (K-12) school campuses to close for the remainder of the school year; school districts are proceeding via distance education. The state has implemented limits for restaurants, bars and other eating and drinking establishments. Additional executive orders authorizing funding for the National Guard, Department



of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Department of Health, Public Education Department and Children, Youth and Families Department have been issued by the governor. State orders and recommendations are subject to change as government agencies respond to the situation. For a full, updated list of restrictions and guidelines, including the list of what is considered "essential" businesses allowed to remain open, see <https://cv.nmhealth.org>.

I'm not in a high-risk category. Why should I practice social distancing and take other precautions? Because COVID-19 is highly virulent, it may spread much easier than other viral or bacterial illnesses, and it may be transmitted either person-to-person or via surface contact. Each individual's response to the virus may vary, so those who acquire the virus don't necessarily show symptoms but still carry it. Because of this, carriers may unwittingly expose others, including high-risk individuals, to the virus. Thus, taking the recommended precautions serves to protect not only you, but others with whom you may or may not come into contact. Additionally, slowing the spread of the virus will increase the likelihood that our country's health-care system will be able to handle the strain of an influx of COVID-19 cases – leading to greater chances that more people will be successfully treated.

For New Mexico status updates regarding coronavirus, visit <https://cv.nmhealth.org>

For national status updates: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>