

Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Tips for protecting yourself and others from COVID-19

What is COVID-19?
A new flu-like virus has been reported in several cities around the world.

What are the symptoms?
According to the World Health Organization (WHO), symptoms of this COVID-19 usually include:

- Feeling tired
- Difficulty breathing
- A high temperature
- A cough and/or sore throat

These symptoms are similar to other respiratory diseases, including flu and the common cold. Symptoms are thought to appear between two and 10 days after contracting the virus. The incubation period during which a person has the disease but is not exhibiting symptoms can be between one day and two weeks. It's possible that the virus can be passed on to others during the incubation period before the person carrying starts to exhibit symptoms.

When to seek medical help
According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, If you have recently travelled to any high risk area, or if you have been in contact with anyone who has visited a high risk area or any of the following:

- visited a live animal market
- had contact with live or dead animals (including raw or undercooked animal products)
- had contact with a sick person who had fever, cough, or difficulty breathing
- you believe you may have come in contact with the COVID-19.

If you **develop**

- fever
- cough
- difficulty breathing

in the next 14 days, call your health care provider or local public health authority. To protect those around you, wash your hands often and cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

How to avoid getting COVID-19
Hand hygiene is the first and most important line of defence. The WHO recommends:

- washing hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds
- carry disposable tissues with you, cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze and dispose of the tissue carefully
- avoiding any unnecessary physical contact with wild animals.

If you've been in contact with wild animals, the WHO recommends you wash your hands immediately. It's also essential to ensure that your meat is cooked thoroughly before consuming it.

Other tips include:

- Carry a hand sanitizer with you to make frequent cleaning of hands easy
- Always wash your hands before you eat
- Be especially careful in busy airports and other public transport systems about touching things and then touching your face
- Do not share snacks from packets or bowls that others are dipping their fingers into
- Regularly clean, not just your hands, but commonly used surfaces and devices you touch or handle

Are some groups of people more at risk than others?
According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this is a rapidly evolving situation and the risk assessment may change daily. You can follow updates based on your region: Sites that include accurate information include the World Health Organization, the Public Health Agency of Canada; the US Centers for Disease Control (USCDC); the Australian Chief Medical Officer, and the UK government.

How to protect your family, especially children
You can significantly lower the risk that children pose of spreading or catching viruses by:

- Explaining to them how germs spread and the importance of good hand and face hygiene
- Keeping household surfaces clean, especially kitchens, bathrooms and door handles
- Using clean cloths to wipe surfaces, so you don't transfer germs from one surface to another
- Giving everyone their own towel and making sure they know not to share toothbrushes etc.

What to do if you are stressed because of the news
If you're feeling nervous about COVID-19, you're not alone. Being concerned and empathetic about this outbreak is normal. However, you may experience feelings of discomfort, impacting concentration, productivity and even disrupting sleep patterns.

What you can do to feel better

- Stick to the facts as communicated by public-health agencies or medical professionals. Instead of reading every article and going to every website, staying away from the web is probably a good idea. If you're concerned, sites that include accurate information include the World Health Organization, the Public Health Agency of Canada; the US Centers for Disease Control (USCDC); the Australian Chief Medical Officer, and the UK government.
- Try and keep it in perspective. Social media can amplify misinformation. Keep in mind that there's a concerted global effort to try and contain this virus, and the World Health Organization is maintaining a webpage with answers to common questions.
- And, of course, stay healthy. Washing your hands often, and properly is the single most effective way to stop the spread of disease.

Where can I find out more information?
At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people. The World Health Organization (WHO) is coordinating the international response to the situation and is providing more information here. You can find reliable information for your country through the following agencies: the Public Health Agency of Canada; the US Centers for Disease Control (USCDC); the Australian Chief Medical Officer, and the UK government.

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