



# DISEASE PREVENTION

## COVID-19 (COVID)

### What is COVID?

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COVID is a respiratory illness caused by a virus named SAR-CoV-2.

### How is COVID spread?

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COVID can spread when someone talks, coughs, or sneezes, sending tiny droplets into the air. If these droplets get into someone else's mouth or nose, they can get sick too. You can also catch COVID by touching surfaces that have the virus on them and then touching your face.

### When is COVID Season?

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COVID's timing and severity throughout the year can vary from month to month.

### Who gets COVID?

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Every year, individuals in our community become sick with COVID. Repeat infections may occur throughout life, and people of any age can be infected.

### When and for how long is a person able to spread COVID?

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People are usually contagious for 5 to 10 days and may become contagious a day or two before they start showing signs of illness.

However, some older adults, and people with weakened immune systems, can continue to spread the virus even after they stop showing symptoms, for as long as 4 weeks.

### How soon after you are exposed to COVID do symptoms appear?

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People infected with COVID usually show symptoms within 2 to 14 days after getting infected.



## What are the symptoms of COVID?

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People infected with COVID usually have mild symptoms and can manage symptoms on their own.

Symptoms of COVID infection usually include the following:

- Fever or chills
- Coughing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Diarrhea
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea and/or vomiting



*Some people are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID and should talk to a healthcare provider right away if experiencing any COVID symptoms.*

*Taking antiviral medicine to treat the virus may shorten the length of your illness and help prevent more serious problems.*

In rare cases, individuals may develop serious complications with severe symptoms that require immediate medical attention.

Emergency symptoms may include:

- Trouble breathing
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Pale, gray or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds

## What can be done to prevent the spread of COVID?

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### 1. Practice Good Hand, Mouth, and Nose Hygiene

- After coughing, sneezing, or touching surfaces in public areas, wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or 60% alcohol hand sanitizers.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing.

### 2. Stay Home When Sick

- Return to normal activities when your symptoms are better overall and you have not had a fever for at least 24 hours without using fever-reducing medicine.
- It is recommended you wear a mask while in public for 5 days after returning to normal activities.

*Consider staying away from people at high risk of getting very sick until:*

- 10 days have passed since your symptoms started,
- 10 days have passed since you tested positive, if you never developed symptoms, or
- You test negative for COVID-19 with an antigen test, such as an at-home test.

*If you need to be around someone at high risk, the most protective step you can take is wearing a well-fitting mask. You can also take steps to improve airflow, air filtration and keep physical distance.*

### 3. Get Immunized

- Visit our Respiratory Illness page at [WhitmanCountyPublicHealth.org](http://WhitmanCountyPublicHealth.org) in the Disease Prevention program to find locations in Whitman County to receive your Respiratory Illness Immunizations.

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Information adapted from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC): [www.cdc.gov/RSV](http://www.cdc.gov/RSV)

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