

## **Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, which is a respiratory pathogen.

COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most infected people will develop mild to moderate illness and recover without further means. People aged 60 and over, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart and lung problems, diabetes, obesity or cancer, are at higher risk of developing serious symptoms.

### **How is COVID-19 transmitted and how long before symptoms will show?**

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or exhales. You can be infected by breathing in the virus if you are within close proximity of someone who has COVID-19, or by touching a contaminated surface and then your eyes, nose or mouth.

The time from exposure to COVID-19 to the moment when symptoms begin is, on average, 5-6 days and can range from 1-14 days. This is why people who have been exposed to the virus are advised to stay home or placed in a quarantine facility, apart from others, for 14 days, in order to prevent the spread of the virus.

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

COVID-19 can present with a large variety of symptoms, most common symptoms are fever, dry cough and tiredness. Other symptoms include muscle or joint aches, sore throat, nasal congestion, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, loss of taste and smell, skin rashes, and discoloration of fingers and toes.

People of all ages who experience symptoms such as fever and/or cough associated with difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, or loss of speech or movement should seek medical care immediately.

### **How is COVID-19 diagnosed and treated?**

COVID-19 can be diagnosed with either a nasal swab, a throat swab or a deep-throat saliva test and normally takes from 2 to 7 days to produce a result. Anyone with symptoms should be tested. People who do not have symptoms but have had close contact with someone who is, or may be infected should undergo testing. While a person is waiting for test results, they should remain isolated from others.

There are no current vaccines or preventative treatments for COVID-19, therefore treatment at this point is focused on relieving symptoms of the virus. WHO does not recommend self-medication with any medicines, including antibiotics, as a prevention or cure for COVID-19.

### **What Preventative measures can I take?**

To protect yourself against the virus the HK Government is recommending members of the community to adhere to the guidelines related to physical distancing, wearing a mask, keeping rooms well ventilated, avoiding crowds, cleaning your hands, and coughing into a bent elbow or tissue. Members of the public are urged to go out less and reduce social activities such as meals gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible. Some important measure to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 are:

- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly.
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. When the hands are cleaned, do not touch the water tap directly again (for example, using a paper towel to wrap the faucet before turn it off). If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80% alcohol-based hand-rub is an effective alternative.
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

**Should your child show any symptoms of COVID-19, please keep your child at home and consult your doctor to have it confirmed. Should your child or anyone within your household be diagnosed with COVID-19, please inform the school immediately and follow the guidelines presented by the [CHP](#) (Centre for Health Protection) and [EDB](#) (Education Bureau).**