



## Where Your Doctor Works for YOU!

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## CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FAQ

**Question:** How bad is this really? Is it all overblown, or are we all about to die?

**Answer:** Neither. This is a serious pandemic (worldwide epidemic), and a minority

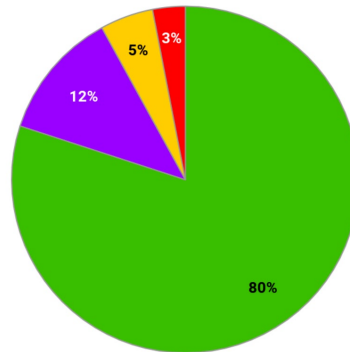
of people who catch this virus will get severely sick. A few will die, but most of us will recover.

COVID-19 is more contagious & more deadly than the flu, but it is much less contagious than Measles, and less deadly than it's relative, SARS, which caused an epidemic in Asia in 2003.

### COVID-19 Coronavirus:

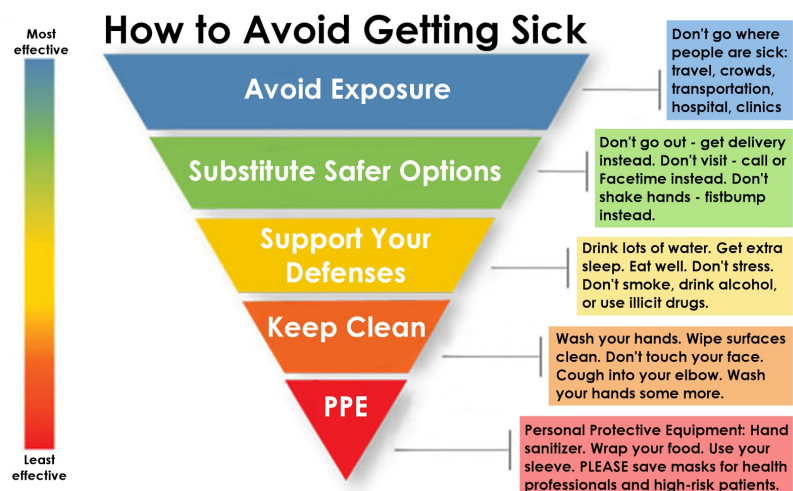
#### Who will get how sick?

- Mild Symptoms: cough, low-grade fever, no need for healthcare visit - 80%
- Moderate Symptoms: some difficulty breathing, needs medical attention (office or phone) - 12%
- Severe Symptoms: serious difficulty breathing, low oxygen, needs hospitalization - 5%
- Death: mostly persons who already had pre-existing serious health limitations - 3%



**Question:** Everyone's giving different advice. What do I really need to do to stay safe?

**Answer:** The most impactful way to stop any germ from spreading is to limit exposure, meaning reducing contact between people. This is why our public leaders have closed down everyday business and are telling us all to stay home. After avoiding exposure, the next most important thing is to support your body's defenses by taking good care of yourself: eat healthy, get enough sleep, manage your stress, and don't smoke or use toxic substances. Wash your hands. Don't touch your face. Wash your hands some more. Wear a cotton mask if you can.

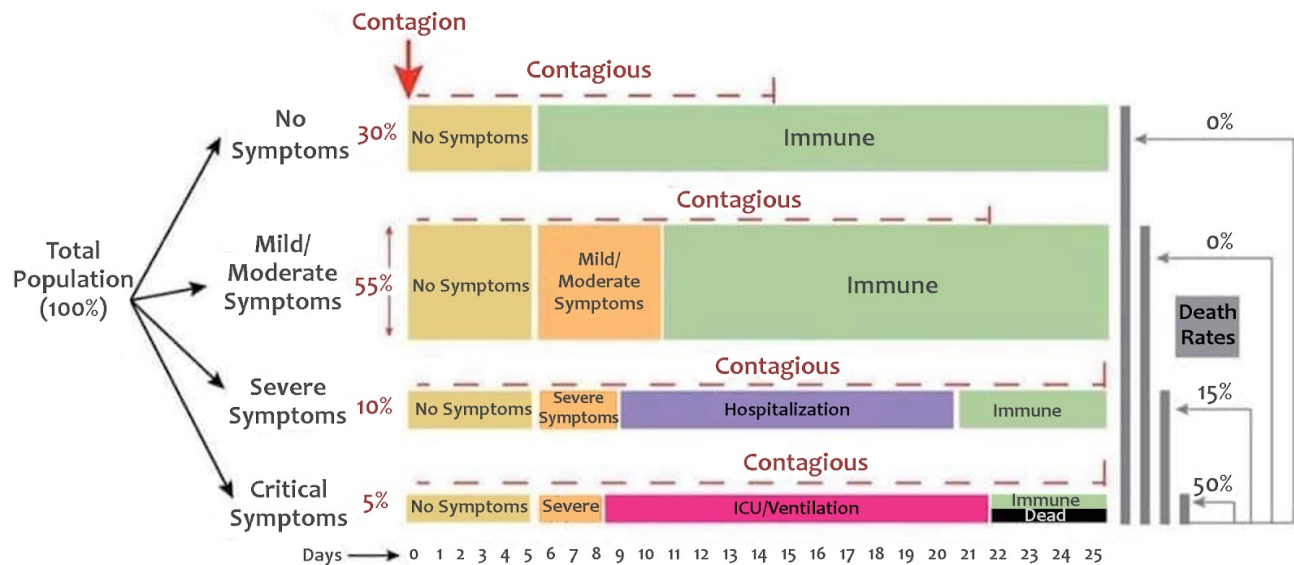


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**Question:** How likely am I to get really sick or die?

**Answer:** Statistics give us general ideas, but our bodies don't always follow the textbook. Before this is over, probably between a quarter and a third of us will catch this virus, and most of us will recover fine at home. However, about one in seven people who catch COVID-19 will become severely sick, so it is crucial to do all we can to limit the spread and protect the most medically vulnerable among us.



**References:**

1. The Incubation Period of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) From Publicly Reported Confirmed Cases: Estimation and Application. Lauer SA et al. Ann Intern Med, 10Mar2020.
2. Impact of Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) to Reduce COVID19 Mortality and Healthcare Demand. Ferguson NM et al. Imperial College COVID-19 Response team, 16Mar2020.
3. Viral Dynamics in Mild and Severe Cases of COVID-19. Yang Liu et al. The Lancet, 19Mar2020.

**Question:** What should I do if I start to feel sick?

**Answer:** Don't panic. Stay home. Don't go to the ER. Call your doctor. If you don't have a doctor of your own, call **TAKE TWO HEALTH** for a CoronaCare Virtual Visit (\$125, Medicare & Medicaid accepted). Currently, testing is not yet widely available, so it's mostly reserved for the sickest hospitalized patients. Look for testing to become more widely available as time goes on. Meanwhile, treatment and quarantine decisions are being made based on symptoms. Stay home. Get rest. Drink lots of fluids. Eat healthy. Don't smoke. Call when you have questions or aren't sure what to do.

**Question:** So who should go to the ER, and when?

**Answer:** If a person can't get a breath in, can't speak in full sentences without losing their breath, can't stay awake, is getting confused or delirious, or isn't able to drink and hold down fluids, it's time to go to the ER.

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**Question:** So, what's the deal with testing?

**Answer:** Currently, testing still remains extremely limited when a person is not critically ill in a hospital.

There are not yet anywhere near enough tests - or the protective gear and supplies to administer the test - to serve the needs of the public, including healthcare workers, first responders, and high-risk/vulnerable patients who need testing. This is a complicated problem throughout the US, and medical professionals are working closely with state and federal public health officials, and the manufacturers of tests and supplies, to increase access to testing as quickly as possible.

For now, we make the best decisions we can, based on each person's unique story and symptoms. **Care and treatment is exactly the same whether a person has been tested or not.**

There are two types of tests that exist and have been approved (neither one is widely available yet):

- The test to see if a person has active COVID-19 in their body, and could be contagious to others, is a swab taken through the nose from deep inside the sinuses. This test can take anywhere from 1-15 days to get results. This test requires a specially-trained healthcare professional to be suited up in specialized protective gear, and is NOT available at outpatient labs. Limited access to these tests is prioritized by:
  - Critically Sick Hospitalized Patients, then
  - Healthcare Workers with Symptoms, then
  - Symptomatic Persons over 65 years of age or with High-Risk Underlying Health Conditions, then
  - Symptomatic First Responders / Critical Infrastructure / Caregivers of Vulnerable Persons
- There is also an Antibody test to see who may have already had the virus in their body. This is a fingerstick blood test with rapid (10-15 minute) results, which was recently approved for use, but is not yet available. (Tests are expected to ship in mid-May from the manufacturer). It is also not a perfect test - it still has a high error rate, and it cannot yet tell the difference between recent exposure and early immune response, versus previous exposure still contagious, versus fully recovered with some immunity.

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**Question: If I don't go to the hospital, how can I take care of myself?**

**Answer:** Most of the same common remedies and self-care that get you through a chest cold or other respiratory illness are still the best things to do. Stay well hydrated by drinking lots of (non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic) fluids. **Zinc throat lozenges** or a **zinc supplement** (50mg twice a day) may help reduce irritation caused by the virus. **Tylenol, rather than ibuprofen**, is the safest bet for a fever-reducer unless you have serious liver problems. Hot tea, honey, or lemon can soothe a cough or sore throat. Over-the-counter cough syrup is safe to use. A hot bath or shower will help soothe muscle aches. If you have asthma, use your inhalers as needed. Get plenty of rest and don't push your limits.

**Question: Are there medications I should take so I don't get really sick?**

**Answer:** There are some preliminary possible treatments making the news, but none of them have been well-studied yet, and they all involve some risk. None of these proposed treatments work as prevention, and some of the medications (chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin) can have dangerous or even fatal side effects and interactions. There are now also serious shortages of many medicines for our sickest hospitalized patients. In general, most people who aren't severely ill should not take additional prescriptions just as a precaution. Still, each person and each situation is unique, so talk to your doctor (or call for a **TAKE TWO HEALTH** Coronacare Virtual Visit) if you become ill.

**Question: Should I stop taking certain medications that might make the virus worse?**

**Answer:** If you are not actively sick with a respiratory infection, keep taking all of your usual medications to keep your body at its healthiest. If you are on a major immunosuppressant like chemotherapy, or biologic drugs for autoimmune disease, it's important to talk with your specialist, because the balance between controlling an underlying problem versus being more susceptible to new infection is different for every individual. **There is some evidence that anti-inflammatories such as Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) may worsen COVID-19 infections, so the safest thing to do is to avoid these drugs if you have any fever or respiratory symptoms** - you can use Acetaminophen (Tylenol) for a fever instead. If you are infected, **certain blood pressure medications and steroids** may also need to be temporarily stopped or replaced, so talk to your doctor (or call for a **TAKE TWO HEALTH** Coronacare Virtual Visit) about any medications you are taking.

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**Question:** How can I protect and support the people I love who are sick or high risk?

**Answer:** Make it a little easier for them to stay home alone: call or videochat often, drop off groceries, pick up prescriptions, help with other errands, play online games together, share stories, and include them in plans for the future. As much as we need food, water, sunlight and shelter, we also need hope and human connection to stay healthy, positive, and resilient. When you're busy brightening someone else's day, neither of you will have as much time to worry.

**Question:** I'm all alone and feel helpless, what can I do?

**Answer:** Hang in there, the isolation will end soon enough. Funny thing is, we're all in this together, each in our own separate space. There are basically two ways to fight the loneliness of solitude: by reaching out to others; and by reaching deeper into the best parts of ourselves. **To reach out** while staying in: connect with old friends one by one and through social media; make new friends in online interest groups, or volunteering (from a safe distance) for a cause you care about. **To "reach in" and nurture yourself:** indulge an old hobby; learn a new skill you've always wanted to try; record some of the memories and unique stories that only you can tell; or try out living as the person you've always wanted to be.

**Question:** Help! I'm trapped living in a situation where I don't feel safe or supported!

**Answer:** Being confined to a hostile environment is scary, depressing, and can be dangerous. If you feel you are in serious danger (to your life, to your physical safety, to your health, or to your sanity), **don't wait to get help.** Emergency services are still operating - call **9-1-1** or reach out to the **SafeHouse Progressive Alliance for Non-Violence** at **303-444-2424**. It also always helps to have someone - a safe friend, or a professional - to help you think through options and make a plan. If you need to talk with someone safe, consider calling:

- Your therapist or your doctor
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255
- Colorado Crisis Line: 844-493-TALK (844-493-8255) / text TALK to 38255
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: 800-950-6264 or text NAMI to 741741
- SafeHouse Progressive Alliance for Non-Violence: 303-444-2424
- Rape Crisis Hotline / Moving to End Sexual Assault (MESA): 303-443-7300
- Out! Boulder (LGBTQ support & resources): 303-499-5757
- The Trevor Project (LGBTQ youth national crisis line) 866-488-7386

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