Erie County Department of Health

PublicHealth
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

COVID-19 FAQs

Information for
COUNTY RESIDENTS

What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China. **For the latest information, go to CDC COVID-19 website.**

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

Yes. COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in parts of the United States. Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Some patients have pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death.

Is there a vaccine or treatment?

There is currently no vaccine and no specific treatment for this disease. People infected with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

How can I help protect myself?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However you should follow these everyday actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.
- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. The CDC has resources for handwashing education materials.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- **Cover** your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue use your elbow not your hands.
- **Clean** and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What do I do if I get symptoms of COVID-19?

- First, **call** your primary care provider and explain your symptoms and any recent travel history or close contact with someone who has.
- Before seeking health care **call ahead** to the facility and tell them your situation. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- **Stay home** when you are sick.
- **Cover** your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue use your elbow not your hands.
- **Clean** and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

WWW.ERIE.GOV/COVID19

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