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What is Novel Coronavirus?

The disease called COVID-19 is caused by a novel (new) coronavirus this means the virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

Signs and Symptoms:

- o Fever
- o Cough
- o Shortness of breath

Incubation period:

- o Ranges from 2-14 days

Contagious Period and Spread

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- o between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- o through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

It 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, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

There is not enough information about the transmission of the virus to completely understand when a patient can spread the virus to others.

To protect yourself and others:

- o Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- o Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based (60% or more) hand sanitizers are also effective.
- o Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- o Try to avoid close contact with sick people or maintain a distance of 6 feet from others. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- o If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid spreading germs.
- o If you have flu-like symptoms, call your doctor AND contact your local health department.

If you have been exposed to an ill person with flu-like symptoms:

- o Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers (60% or more) are also effective.
- o Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- o Monitor yourself for symptoms of fever, chills, nasal congestion, sore throat and/or cough.
- o If you develop these symptoms, call your doctor.

Emergency Medical Services and Law Enforcement

The top priority at this time with COVID – 19 is to prevent the virus from disrupting your EMS and Law Enforcement operations. Actions taken early in outbreaks (such as following your employer’s plan for exposure and control, proper use of PPE and standard precautions) can significantly reduce the spread of the virus.

Please practice the following actions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 amongst your responders.

- If possible, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet.
- Practice proper hand hygiene. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Have a trained Emergency Medical Service/ Emergency Medical Technician (EMS/EMT) assess and transport anyone you think might have COVID-19 to a healthcare facility.
- Ensure only trained personnel wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) have contact with individuals who have or may have COVID-19.
- Learn your employer’s plan for exposure control and participate in trainings on the use of PPE for respiratory protection, if available.

Resources for EMS and Law Enforcement

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/first-responders.html>

What Law Enforcement Personnel Need to Know about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-law-enforcement.html>

Interim Guidance for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Systems and 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) for COVID-19 in the United States

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html>

Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirators-strategy/index.html>

Other resources:

Cook County Department of Public Health:

<https://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/novel-coronavirus/>

708.633.4000

Chicago Department of Public Health:

<https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cdph.html>

312-746-7425 or 312-746-4538

Illinois Department of Health:

<http://dph.illinois.gov/>

1-800-889-3931