

Corona Virus Information Summary

Ross T. Lyon, MD, FACS

Viruses are the most common organisms in nature.

Viruses infect bacteria, plants and animals (including humans).

They can only reproduce in a host.

Viruses are very specific about the hosts they choose to infect.

Corona viruses most commonly infect non-human primates and birds but occasionally can infect humans as well.

SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome) are previous severe Corona virus infections in humans. Other Corona viruses have previously caused "common cold" outbreaks in humans (usually caused by Rhino viruses). Influenza is caused by the influenza viruses (A-D), incl. H1N1 (Spanish flu and Swine flu), H2N2 (Asian flu), H3N2 (Hong Kong flu), H5N1 (Bird flu).

COVID-19 is the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, commonly called "the Corona virus".

Corona viruses are RNA viruses with protein projections from the surface forming the appearance of a crown around the virus particles.

It is a highly contagious virus.

Covid-19 is a respiratory infection spread mostly by coughing, sneezing near other individuals.

Touching infected individuals or recently contaminated surfaces can also result in infection.

Fortunately the virus does not usually live very long on most material surfaces (usually < 5hrs) but may be detectable for several days.

People in close proximity to someone whom has been recently infected ARE HIGHLY LIKELY TO BECOME INFECTED.

Common symptoms are: fever, muscle aches, cough and shortness of breath (difficulty breathing).

Symptoms are most commonly mild to moderate but can be severe in 3-5% of individuals and fatal in approximately 1-2% of people 40 yrs. or older, with risk increasing with age.

Individuals < 20 years old are not as commonly affected and usually only develop mild symptoms when infected.

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Infected individuals are infectious even before developing symptoms and during the early stages of symptomatic infection.

Best estimates indicate that the median incubation period (duration from exposure to the onset of symptoms) is 5 days but a range from 2 to 15 days is estimated as possible (Johns Hopkins analysis of cases, Annals of Internal Medicine, March 10th).

Infected individuals are not contagious once symptoms have largely resolved.

Prevention of infection depends primarily on isolation of **and from** recently infected individuals.

Avoid large groups, public transportation, meetings, handshakes, touching, doorknobs, elevator buttons and other commonly touched items and surfaces.

Use “social distancing practices” when in proximity to others (distance of >6 feet).

Avoid proximity to anyone coughing or sneezing (at minimum, both should wear masks and wash hands prior to and following any close proximity).

Soap, bleach, alcohol and steam will kill the virus.

Use Clorox wipes or alcohol wipes to touch common surfaces or to cough or sneeze into.

Wash hands or use alcohol or Clorox wipes prior to touching face, utensils or cups.

If exposed (proximity <6 feet) to an infected individual- self quarantine at home for 14 days. Notify recent contacts if you develop symptoms.

If sick, self-isolate, for 14 days or until symptoms resolve, notify recent contacts (within 7 days of symptom onset), don't share room, utensils, dishware, and bathroom with others. Use mask if in proximity to others.

Wear respiratory mask (N 95 or higher) IF YOU ARE INFECTED and around others, if you have a cough or are sneezing, or if you are in close proximity to others that are.

Notify your physician (and workplace) or local health department of your illness and isolation and recent contacts.

Go to a specified corona virus hospital [only if] you are having trouble breathing.