What Parents Need to Know About Coronavirus

COVID-19 has been making headlines around the world. While COVID-19 originated in China, cases have been reported around the world – even in the United States.

As cases increase nationally and globally, you might be wondering if you should be worried. Below are answers to some frequently asked questions about COVID-19.

What Are Coronaviruses?
Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Coronaviruses that infect people usually only cause mild respiratory disease, such as the common cold. However, at least two other coronaviruses have caused severe disease: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV) coronavirus and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-Cov) coronavirus.

How is COVID-19 Transmitted?
The virus that causes COVID-19 is being passed from person to person through respiratory secretions – the snot and spit that may spew when you cough or sneeze. Experts think that the virus can also be spread by touching contaminated surfaces. For example, if you touch a doorknob or other surface that an infected person has touched or sneezed on then you touch your face, you could pick up the virus.

Should I Wear a Face Mask?
Wearing a face mask in public areas will not protect a healthy person from picking up COVID-19. In fact, wearing a face mask could increase the risk that you will touch your face with unwashed hands. However if you are sick with a respiratory infection and are going to see the doctor, then wear a face mask to avoid spreading germs to others at the doctor’s office.

What Are the Symptoms?
Symptoms of infection include fever, cough and difficulty breathing. The severity of symptoms range from mild to severe. In some cases, patients have died after COVID-19 infection.

What Should a Person Experiencing Symptoms Do?
If you have been in an area affected by COVID-19 or in close contact with someone who is infected in the last two weeks and show symptoms of fever, cough or difficulty breathing, you should:

• Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor’s office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel or exposure and your symptoms.
• Avoid contact with others.
• Avoid traveling when sick.
• Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
• Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

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How Can You Prevent COVID-19?
The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. There is currently no vaccine for the COVID-19 virus. The CDC recommends that people avoid all nonessential travel to China, Iran, Italy and South Korea. For the latest updates on travel recommendations visit: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html.

We are currently in peak cold and flu season. Everyday preventive actions can help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including the flu and COVID-19.

• Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
• Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
• 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.
• Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

How Dangerous Is COVID-19?
Experts are still learning a lot about COVID-19. Older people and people with health conditions such as heart disease, lung disease and diabetes appear to be at higher risk for severe illness, according to the CDC.

The CDC and the World Health Organization are monitoring the situation closely. You can find regular updates about the latest travel warnings and health-related information here: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Your child has access to health care services in your school through Nationwide Children’s Care Connection school-based health services.

Learn more at NationwideChildrens.org/Care-Connection or call (614) 355-2590.