Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19

Q: What is COVID-19?
A: COVID-19, or coronavirus disease 2019, is respiratory disease caused by one of the seven coronaviruses known to infect humans. It was first identified in humans in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019. The virus that causes COVID-19 isSARS-CoV-2.

Q: What can I do to prevent COVID-19?
A: The best way to prevent COVID-19 is to get vaccinated as soon as you can. To find a place to get vaccinated, visit gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov. You will have the fullest protection two weeks after receiving a one-dose vaccine or two weeks after receiving the second dose of a two-dose vaccine. For detailed information on COVID-19 vaccines, including information on their safety and effectiveness, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine.
Whether or not you are vaccinated, wear a mask when in indoor public places or attending large gatherings and stay at least 6 feet away from people who don't live in your household.

Q: Am I at risk of getting COVID-19?
A: Yes. There is community spread across Ohio and the United States, meaning you can pick up the virus that causes COVID-19 from people you know or from out in your community from unknown sources, much like you catch the flu. People who are fully vaccinated are less likely to get COVID-19 or to suffer serious illness or death if they do become infected.

Q: What is the Delta variant?
A: The Delta variant is the primary strain of the virus that causes COVID-19 in Ohio and the United States. The Delta variant has proven more contagious and more dangerous than previous variants, and it makes people sicker quicker. People infected with Delta may have a higher chance of serious illness or death.

Q: Can I get COVID-19 if I'm vaccinated? What is a "breakthrough" case?
A: COVID-19 vaccines prevent most infections. However, like other vaccines, they are not 100% effective. A vaccine breakthrough infection happens when a fully vaccinated person gets infected with COVID-19. Such people are less likely to develop serious illness than those who are unvaccinated and get COVID-19.
People with vaccine breakthrough infections may spread COVID-19 to others even if they are not showing symptoms, so it is important to wear a mask when in indoor public places or attending large gatherings and to stay at least 6 feet away from people who don't live in your household.

Q: How does COVID-19 spread?
A: COVID-19 is spread through droplets and very small particles produced when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. New infections can occur when others who are close by (usually within 6 feet) breathe in the droplets. Infections can also occur if the particles land on the eyes, nose, or mouth, or through touching the eyes, nose or mouth with hands that have virus on them.

Q: Should I wear a mask?
A: Whether or not you are vaccinated, you should wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth when you are in indoor public places or attending large gatherings. Masks are on public transportation and inside transportation hubs in the U.S. Masks should **never be used on children younger than 2,** anyone with breathing problems, or anyone who cannot easily remove them on their own.

Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
A: Symptoms, which generally appear two to 14 days after exposure, include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting,or diarrhea. Symptoms range from mild to severe; however, some people with COVID-19 have no symptoms. Older adults, people with certain chronic health conditions, and people with compromised immune systems are more likely to become more severely ill. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updates its list of possible symptoms as more is learned about COVID-19.

Q: What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?
A: Call a healthcare professional if you develop symptoms listed above. Older people, people with certain underlying medical conditions,and people with compromised immune symptoms should contact a healthcare provider early. If you experience severe symptoms(e.g., persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, bluish lips or face, or other concerning symptoms), call 911 or contact a healthcare provider or emergency department and seek care immediately.

Q: Where can I get tested?
A: Testing for COVID-19 remains critical to helping stop the spread of this virus. Many options are available for Ohioans seeking a test, including rapid tests, some of which you can administer at home using telehealth services. To find testing locations, visit the "Testing and Community Health Centers" page at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Q: Can I get the flu and COVID-19 at the same time?
A: Yes. It is possible to test positive for seasonal influenza (flu) or other respiratory infections and COVID-19 at the same time. Because some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, it may be hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Testing may be needed to help confirm a diagnosis.

Q: Should I get a flu shot if I have gotten the COVID-19 vaccine or plan to get it?
A: Yes. The CDC urges everyone older than 6 months of age to get a flu shot to help protect themselves and their communities. A flu shot will not prevent COVID-19, so be sure to get a COVID-19 vaccine too. Get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you can, and ideally get a flu vaccine by the end of October. You can get a COVID-19 vaccine and a flu vaccine at the same time.

Q: Can I get COVID-19 from my pet? If I'm sick, can I make my pet sick?
A: Based on the available information to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered low. However, COVID-19 can spread from people to animals, including pets, in some situations, mostly during close contact. If you become sick with COVID-19, isolate yourself from everyone else in your home, including pets and other animals. Find more information at the CDC's "What You Should Know about COVID-19 and Pets" webpage.

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For additional information, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For answers to your COVID-19 questions, call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxietyrelated to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the COVID-19 CareLine at 1-800-720-9616.