



COVID-19 INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common throughout the world. Human coronaviruses spread just like the flu or a cold—through the air by coughing or sneezing; through close personal contact, like touching or shaking hands; by touching an object or surface with the viruses on it; and occasionally, through fecal contamination. This has occurred previously with the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreaks. The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people. It is important to call (814) 451-7801 before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room after coming back from traveling to an area with widespread COVID-19 disease. If you get sick with a fever (38°C/100.4°F or higher), cough, or have trouble breathing, seek medical care; tell your doctor about your recent travel and your symptoms, avoid contact with others.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Older adults and people who have severe chronic medical conditions like heart, lung or kidney disease seem to be at higher risk for more serious COVID-19 illness. Recent studies suggest older people are twice as likely to have serious COVID-19 illness because:

- As people age, their immune systems change, making it harder for their bodies to fight off diseases and infection.
- Many older adults are also more likely to have underlying health conditions that make it harder to cope with and recover from illness.

If you are at increased risk for COVID-19 complications due to age or because you have a severe underlying medical condition, it is especially important for you to take action to reduce your risk of exposure.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The department frequently exercises and prepares for a potential infectious disease outbreak. We have been monitoring the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak using information from our federal, state, and local partners and are preparing our response teams in case of an outbreak here. We have talked with health care partners about the potential spread of the COVID-19 into the United States and how they will work with public health to evaluate potential cases.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS ?

Symptoms of the COVID-19 can include:

- Fever (38°C/100.4°F or higher)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Cover** any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, do not use your hands!
- **Clean** surfaces frequently, such as counter tops, light switches, cell phones and other frequently touched areas. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water is not available. When using hand sanitizer, apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount) and rub the product all over the surfaces of your hands until your hands are dry.
- **Contain** - If you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, visit <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

The latest information on COVID-19 In the U.S. and worldwide can be found on the CDC website [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

Questions or concerns may be directed to the Erie County Department of Health (814)451-6700 or our dedicated phone line for COVID-19 inquiries from the Limited English Proficiency Population (814)451-7801

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