

March 2, 2020

Capital Area Pediatrics is here to educate and serve our patients and community. While the situation regarding Coronavirus is rapidly evolving, we hope to continue to be a resource for you during this time. We have been working closely with the local health departments for weeks to navigate the emerging situation.

Human Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that commonly cause mild to moderate illness like the common cold. Almost everyone gets infected with one of these viruses at some point in their lives, and most of the time the illness lasts for a short amount of time.

A new human coronavirus, COVI-19 (also referred to as the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, 2019-nCoV, or SARS-coV-2) was discovered in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. It started as an outbreak, has since become an epidemic, and may be set to become a pandemic. COVID-19 is the name of the respiratory illness caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus. Transmission is mainly through respiratory droplets and close contact – similar to how influenza is spread. The incubation period is thought to be 1-14 days. Patients are thought to be most contagious when they are symptomatic.

What are the Symptoms of COVID-19?

The majority of infected people appear to have *mild* infections – with cold-like symptoms and fever, and likely many who have no symptoms.

Reported symptoms are similar to the flu and can include:

- Fever
- Uncomplicated upper respiratory symptoms (Cough, sore throat, nasal congestion, malaise, headache, muscle aches)
- Shortness of breath
- Pneumonia
- Severe illness (Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI); Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS); sepsis and septic shock)

Children seem less vulnerable to infection and appear to have milder symptoms than adults. There have been NO reported deaths in children 0-9 years of age.

What is the COVID-19 mortality rate?

Unfortunately, we don't really know. The high number of deaths in China is devastating, but may not be reflective of mortality rates in other parts of the world given the lack of hospital staff, medical supplies, ICU beds, and test kits.

Current mortality statistics based on best available prelim data:

- average overall mortality rate 2.3%
- history of high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, chronic lung disease, or cancer 5-10%
- no history of chronic disease <1%
- overall men 2.8%
- overall women 1.7%
- By age: over 80 years old 14.8%
 40-49 years old 0.4%
 30-39 years old 0.2%
 10-19 of age 0.0018%
 0-9 years of age ~0%

How to Protect your Family

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Masks may limit the spread of illness from someone who is exhibiting symptoms, but they will *not* prevent a well person from getting the illness.

Here are a few other ways you can keep your family healthy and help prevent the spread of viruses, including:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer as a substitute if needed.
- Stay home when you're sick, unless you need medical attention.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or a tissue.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Keep your distance. Try to stay at least 6 feet away from anyone who is obviously sick with fever and/or respiratory symptoms.
- Avoid travel to high risk areas until this outbreak has passed per [CDC recommendations](#).

If you have recently traveled or had direct exposure to confirmed COVID-19 AND have fever, cough or shortness of breath, please call to speak to us before being seen. At present, test kits are not widely available. We will be communicating with the local health department for safest evaluation and management.

Families are encouraged to stay up to date about this situation. See the resources below for the latest developments from the CDC, including travel warnings, new cases and prevention advice.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>