

Viral Pneumonia due to COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the cause of COVID-19?

The viral pneumonia which first arose in Wuhan City, China, is now called COVID-19 (which stands for Coronavirus Disease 2019), and is caused by a novel coronavirus.

2. How is the viral pneumonia being transmitted?

The novel coronavirus causing COVID-19 spreads through droplets and contact. There have been reports of community transmission, as well as infection in healthcare workers (in countries other than Singapore), and there is evidence to suggest that person-to-person transmission has occurred in many settings.

3. What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of this viral pneumonia include:

- Fever (most common symptom)
- Shortness of breath
- Other respiratory symptoms (such as cough, sore throat, runny nose)

4. How contagious is the viral pneumonia due to COVID-19?

There is now evidence that the novel coronavirus may be transmitted from person to person.

5. What can I do to avoid the infection?

To reduce the risk of exposure to this viral pneumonia, please take note of the following, especially if you are travelling to mainland China (especially Hubei, Zhejiang, Guangdong, Anhui and Henan):

- Avoid contact with live animals (including poultry and other birds), and avoid consumption of raw and undercooked meats
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell or showing symptoms of illness such as fever, cough or shortness of breath
- Observe good personal hygiene
- Practise frequent hand washing with soap (e.g. before handling food or eating, after going to toilet, or when hands are dirtied after coughing or sneezing)
- Wear a mask if you have respiratory symptoms such as a cough or runny nose
- Cover your mouth with a tissue paper when coughing or sneezing, and dispose of the soiled tissue paper in the rubbish bin immediately
- Seek medical attention promptly if you are feeling unwell.

6. Is there any vaccine for the viral pneumonia due to COVID-19?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent the viral pneumonia. Please seek medical advice immediately from your doctor if you develop fever and cough and/or breathlessness within **14 days** of return from travel.

7. How is this viral pneumonia due to COVID-19 diagnosed?

Respiratory samples from patients who are suspected of having this pneumonia (either a swab from patient's nose and throat, or a phlegm sample) will be taken and sent for a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to detect the novel coronavirus, as well as rule out other known respiratory viruses that may explain the symptoms of the patients. This is a molecular test that detects the DNA of numerous respiratory viruses.

8. Am I at risk of the viral pneumonia due to COVID-19? What should I do if I return from mainland China, or have close contact with a person who is a confirmed case of COVID-19, and fall ill?

Returning travellers from mainland China, or those who have had contact with persons who are confirmed cases of COVID-19, should monitor themselves for signs and symptoms such as fever, shortness of breath or cough. If you have returned from travel from mainland China, you should take a Leave of Absence (LOA) for **14 days** from the day of return. During this time, you should stay home and monitor your own symptoms. You should wear a surgical mask and seek early medical attention if you are ill with such symptoms. You should also inform their doctors of their travel history should they develop these symptoms within **14 days** of returning from travel. You should also maintain good hygiene, and wash your hands regularly with soap and water.

9. Is there any treatment for the viral pneumonia due to COVID-19?

There are no specific anti-viral medications for this unknown viral pneumonia, but supportive medical care can help patients survive this infection.

10. What are the preventive measures in place for NCID?

All suspected and confirmed cases admitted to NCID will be isolated in a single room and managed under strict precautions. Stringent processes are also in place for our Emergency Department, inpatient wards and specialist outpatient clinics to proactively screen patients with symptoms of respiratory illnesses and a travel history to the affected region.

11. How do I know if I have the common cold, the flu or something more severe?

In the reported cases of the viral pneumonia due to novel coronavirus, the most common symptoms have been fever, associated with shortness of breath and abnormal chest X-ray

findings.

If you have a travel history to mainland China, please let your doctor know so that you can be tested for other respiratory viral infections.

12. Where can I find the latest updates on the viral pneumonia due to COVID-19?

The most updated global situation on the unknown viral pneumonia from Wuhan City can be found on WHO's website at:

<https://www.who.int/csr/don/05-january-2020-pneumonia-of-unkown-cause-china/en/>

MOH Health advisories and Press releases can be found at:

<https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/update-on-local-situation-regarding-severe-pneumonia-cluster-in-wuhan>