What is this new coronavirus called COVID-19?

The CDC and WHO are actively monitoring the outbreak of a new coronavirus strain called COVID-19, which causes respiratory illness. The virus, which has infected thousands of people worldwide and caused deaths, originated in Wuhan City, China. Additional cases have now been reported in the United States. Visit the CDC Traveler’s Health website for travel notices and precautions.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and even death.

People with heart and lung disease or weakened immune systems, as well as infants and older adults, are at higher risk for lower respiratory tract illness.

How is COVID-19 spread?

Human coronaviruses are usually spread from an infected person to others through the air by coughing and sneezing and through close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.

How can you protect yourself or others from COVID-19?

Although there are currently no vaccines available to protect against human coronavirus infection, you may be able to reduce your risk of infection by washing your hands often, avoiding touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands, and avoiding close contact with people who are sick.

If you have cold-like symptoms, as a courtesy to your co-workers and others, please remain at home while you are sick.

If you share a work station or equipment with others, consider wiping it down with disinfectant wipes after use.

For information about hand washing, see the CDC’s Clean Hands Save Lives website.

What should you do if you suspect you or someone else has contracted COVID-19?

Most people with common human coronavirus illness will recover on their own. Although there are no specific treatments for illnesses caused by human coronaviruses, you can take the following actions to help relieve symptoms if you are mildly sick:

- Take pain and fever medications. Ask your pharmacist how they may interact with any medications you currently take. Caution: The CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend not giving aspirin to children.
- Use a room humidifier or take a hot shower to help ease a sore throat and cough.
- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Stay home and rest.

If you are concerned about your symptoms, please see your local health care provider.
Who should be tested for COVID-19?

The CDC recommends that anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, who has visited Wuhan City, China, or who has been in contact with someone who is suspected or confirmed of having the coronavirus within the last 14 days should be tested.

If you suspect that you have contracted COVID-19, where can you go to be tested?

The U.S Food and Drug Administration has issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) to enable emergency use of the CDC’s 2019-nCoV Real-Time RT-PCR Diagnostic Panel. This authorization allows the use of the test at any CDC-qualified lab in the U.S.

What is CVS Health doing to prepare for a potential increase of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Through the work of the CVS Health Emergency Response & Resiliency Team and Infectious Disease Response Team, we continue to actively monitor the current international and domestic environment for coronavirus-related risks and prepare accordingly. Specifically, these teams are:

- Collaborating with partners across the Enterprise to help bolster business unit preparation and continuity, with a focus on meeting the needs of the consumers and other customers we serve, if and when warranted.
- Developing travel, Work from Home, and other HR-related guidance to help employees stay safe and healthy.
- Working with external public health organizations and other stakeholders, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to boost awareness of CVS Health’s emergency preparedness efforts and capabilities.

What is MinuteClinic doing to prepare for patients who may have COVID-19 symptoms?

- CVS Health and MinuteClinic are collaborating closely with local health departments related to COVID-19. When we see a patient who is presenting with symptoms of an upper-respiratory tract illness, we ask about their recent travel history (e.g., timeframe and location) and evaluate relevant risk factors to determine their risk of exposure to COVID-19. These visits may also include recommending further consult with a physician to determine if a higher level of care is required.
- MinuteClinic also offers patients the opportunity to request a Video Visit in 40 states and Washington, D.C. Virtual care options such as video visits can be an effective way to evaluate and treat viruses from the comfort of one’s home, while minimizing exposure to other potentially contagious viruses.

What is CVS Health doing to address potential drug shortages related to the current COVID-19 outbreak?

- We are closely monitoring the global manufacturing environment. We do not see any disruptions to the supply chain that will affect our ability to fill prescriptions for plan members, now and into the near future. We always encourage members to refill maintenance medications in a timely manner.
In addition to CVS Health’s monitoring, the Food and Drug Administration is closely monitoring medications that are made in China or rely solely on active pharmaceutical ingredients from China. The agency also said it has reminded more than 180 manufacturers to notify the FDA of any potential supply chain disruptions.

Given the evolving nature of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we will continue to monitor the situation and work with our suppliers to address issues as they arise. We will alert clients to potential disruptions and share our contingency plans to address them.

Where can you obtain more information?

You can find more information on COVID-19 at these links: