



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Information as at March 12, 2020

WFC Public Health Committee

On March 11, 2020 COVID-19 was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic. Chiropractors are primary contact health care professionals and therefore need to keep updated with the latest information. The WFC recognizes WHO as the authoritative global source for information regarding COVID-19. The following information is from WHO sources.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the recently discovered novel (new) coronavirus. Several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections in humans. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. On January 30, 2020 the International Health Regulations Committee of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern” and on March 11, 2020 it was officially declared a pandemic.

What is a pandemic?

Declaring a pandemic has nothing to do with the characteristics of the disease but is instead associated with concerns over its geographic spread. According to WHO, a pandemic is declared when a new disease for which people do not have immunity spreads around the world beyond expectations. Once a pandemic is declared it becomes more likely that community spread will eventually happen, and governments and health systems need to ensure they are prepared for that.

How does COVID-19 spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales if one breathes in these droplets. Another way is when these droplets land on objects and surfaces and one touches these surfaces, then touch their eyes, nose or mouth, they can catch COVID-19. WHO is assessing ongoing research on the ways COVID-19 is spreading and will continue to share updates.

How long is the incubation period for COVID-19?

The “incubation period” means the time between catching the virus and beginning to have symptoms of the disease. Most estimates of the incubation period for COVID-19 range from 1-14 days, most commonly around 5 days. These estimates will be updated by WHO as more data become available.

Spread of COVID-19

As at March 12, 2020, WHO is reporting 124,847 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in 118 countries. There have been 4613 deaths. China (80,981), Italy (12,462), Iran (9000) and the Republic of Korea (7869) account for 88% of all reported cases.

WHO is publishing current figures via its [COVID-19 Situation Dashboard](#).

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The most common symptoms are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems (particularly high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and cancer) are more likely to develop serious illness. About 2% of people with the disease have died. People with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention.

Should I wear a mask to protect myself?

People with no respiratory symptoms, such as cough, do not need to wear a medical mask. WHO recommends the use of masks for people who have symptoms of COVID-19 and those caring for individuals who have symptoms, such as cough and fever. The use of masks is crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone (at home or in a health care facility).

WHO advises rational use of medical masks to avoid unnecessary wastage of precious resources and misuse of masks. Use a mask only if you have respiratory symptoms (coughing or sneezing), have suspected COVID-19 infection with mild symptoms, or are caring for someone with suspected COVID-19 infection. A suspected COVID-19 infection is linked to travel in areas where cases have been reported, or close contact with someone who has traveled in these areas and has become ill.

Recommendations

- Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Maintain at least 1 meter (3 feet) distance from anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Follow good respiratory hygiene. Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of the used tissue immediately.
- Clean surfaces with disinfectant.
- Avoid unprotected contact with farm or wild animals.
- Within health care facilities, enhance standard infection prevention and control practices in hospitals, especially in emergency departments.
- If you feel unwell, stay at home.
- If you develop fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical advice promptly as this may be due to a respiratory infection or other serious condition. Call in advance and tell your provider of any recent travel or contact with travelers.
- Stay informed on the latest developments about COVID-19. Follow advice given by your healthcare provider, your national and local public health authority or your employer on how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

According to WHO, the following measures are NOT effective against COVID-2019 and can be harmful

- Smoking
- Taking traditional herbal remedies
- Wearing multiple masks
- Taking self-medication such as antibiotics. Antibiotics do not work against viruses, such as COVID-19.

Treatment

There are no specific antiviral treatments or vaccines currently available for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe symptoms, treatment should involve care to support vital organ functions. People who think they have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their health provider immediately.



WHO information

WHO information about COVID-19 can be found at <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Further information and resources

WHO advice for Healthcare Providers

[Recommendations](#) for the workplace

Health Care Worker [information](#)

WHO [situation reports](#)

Center for Disease Control (United States)

Health Care Professional [information](#)

COVID-19 [overview](#)

WHO advice for the Public

Advice for the [public](#)

MythBusters information for the [public](#)

Three videos about COVID-19 [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).