

# CoronaVirus: The Facts for You and Your Family

It seems that all the world is in a panic. How much of that is hysteria and how much is just sensible caution?

Let's take a brief look at the facts, why they matter, how they may impact your family, and what you can do about it.

## Some pertinent facts about CoronaVirus (COVID-19)

1. **COVID-19 is a novel virus.** Many other viruses, for example the common cold, chicken pox, and even polio, have been around for thousands of years. During that time, we've either built up some level of natural immunity or developed it through medical technology. Until, at best, a few months ago, humankind had never seen COVID-19 before. Therefore, we have no evolutionary immunity and haven't yet had time to come up with a technological solution. At the moment, we are literally defenseless against it.
2. **Your risk is actually very low.** We know that the first point seems rather alarmist so let's throw in some perspective. Only 0.6% of people who get COVID-19 actually die from it. That means that even if you get it, you have less than a 1% chance of dying. So why the big deal then?
3. **COVID-19 spreads quite easily.** Once a person is exposed to the virus, it will be about five days before they show any symptoms or even know they are sick. During that time, they are contagious and can unwittingly pass it on to others. The virus can live outside the human body in the air for about eight hours and on surfaces for up to two days. For these reasons, experts estimate that between 40%-70% of the entire human race will catch the disease within the next 12 months.
4. **How bad can it be?** The severity of COVID-19 varies. A few people who get it have essentially no symptoms. This can pose problems because they can still pass it on to others. For most people, it will range from being like a bad cold to being more like the flu. As long as you have a healthy immune system and get good care, you'll get over it and be just fine afterward. Still, there are 327 million people in the United States. Going with the very lowest end of the expert's estimates, if only 40% of them catch COVID-19, that means about 131 million people will get sick. Since, on average, 0.6% of them will die, that's about 785,000 people in the United States alone.

## How might all this affect you and your family

Again, we're not trying to be alarmist. We're just presenting the facts according to all the health experts who are most knowledgeable about COVID-19.

Nationwide, communities are essentially shutting down. Schools are closing, large events from conferences to concerts are being canceled, companies are sending workers home, travel has come to a grinding halt.

This isn't panic; it's a way of trying to prevent the spread of the virus. The fewer people you interact with, the fewer chances you have of being exposed.

Consider a classroom of twenty children. If each of them belongs to a family of four, that's eighty points of contact. If just one parent each from only half those families went out shopping for groceries or other household goods, each of them likely came in contact with roughly 100 other people. Not even counting all the people that each of *those* people have been in contact with, the number of points of contact is already well over 1,000.

So you can see how the numbers escalate very quickly!

People are social creatures and that's especially true of children. If your kids are going to be kept home, they are bound to feel cut off from their social circle. They will almost certainly want to have play dates or to hang out with friends.

Dr. Steve Silvestro, pediatrician and host of "The Child Repair Guide" podcast, has these recommendations:

- Pick just one other family with kids around the same age as yours. If both families agree to socialize only with each other and no one else, that goes a long way toward mitigating the risks for all involved.
- If you do let your kids get together with their friends, do not do it indoors or on any playgrounds or surfaces where the virus could be lingering. Instead pick a park or open grassy area.

We'd throw in the suggestion to arrange virtual play dates. Let your kids have a bit more screen time than you might normally. Make it supervised if necessary. Make sure they use this extra online time to have video chats with their friends.

## When will it end?

No one knows for sure how long these precautions will be necessary but most experts say the worst should be over within two to four weeks.

Until then, COVID-19 should be treated with caution, not fear.