

## Understanding the COVID-19 and Ways to Handle It

The coronavirus, or COVID-19, began impacting the United States on January 20th, nearly 3 weeks after its introduction in China. In response to this pandemic, measures are continually being taken to keep communities safe, including quarantines, social distancing and education from the CDC and WHO (World Health Organization). The latest information advises that there exists a correlation between advanced age and complications caused by COVID-19. Additionally, individuals with a medical history of heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory illness are considered particularly susceptible to complications resulting from COVID-19 and are advised to take extra care in avoiding exposure. In many instances, symptoms are mild, and affected individuals are instructed to recover at home. Some individuals are asymptomatic, presenting no indication of illness or exposure. The CDC is currently working to develop a Serology test to detect the presence of antibodies in individuals, and by extension, establish who has been exposed. Individuals who have recovered from the COVID-19 virus have adaptive immunity to it and are no longer considered contagious. While many people who contract COVID-19 will not experience life-threatening symptoms, protecting the elderly and vulnerable members of our community remains a leading priority.

In addition to the “Do the Five” initiative (HANDS Wash them often, ELBOW Cough into It, FACE Don't touch it, SPACE Keep a safe distance, HOME Stay if you can) provided by the World Health Organization, there are several tools which can help protect the well-being of yourself and/or family during this time. Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces is an effective way of making and keeping your home a safe environment. If you have children, it is recommended that you communicate the facts of this illness to them and allow them to ask questions. Understanding the basics and particulars can go a long way in alleviating anxiety. Talking to others, as well as taking time for adequate sleep, good nutrition, exercise, and activities you enjoy, are also important factors in caring for yourself and loved ones. In the event you or a family member begin to show symptoms, call your health care provider to determine the best course of action. Having a plan of attack for your household is also recommended. Knowing who to contact, where to go, and what to do if you or someone in your home begins to show signs of COVID-19 is one of the best ways to navigate and stay prepared. There are a number of resources for families and individuals as well seeking support during this time.