



**Should I cancel my travels
because of COVID-19?**
WHO Q&As Session

How can Pharmacists Control the Outbreak?
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IPSF PRESS RELEASE ON COVID-19

A large family of viruses, coronaviruses (CoV) cause illnesses that range from the common cold to more severe illnesses like the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). Coronaviruses are zoonotic, which means that they spread between animals and humans and investigations have discovered that SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV were transmitted from civet cats to humans and from dromedary camels to humans respectively. The novel coronavirus, which is the strain that has the world currently on edge, has not been previously identified in humans. This new, or “novel” coronavirus is being referred to as COVID-19 and the outbreak was first reported in Wuhan, China in December 2019.

There have been a number of concerns raised regarding who can catch the virus and at present, the COVID-19 is circulating in China where a significant number of infected people have been reported. The World Health Organization (WHO) is actively and continuously monitoring the COVID-19 epidemiology to get a better understanding of where the virus is circulating as well as how people can best protect themselves from infection.

It is thought that person-to-person transmission of COVID-19 is as a result of respiratory droplets that are produced when an infected person either coughs or sneezes, as is the case with how flu and other respiratory pathogens are transmitted. The droplets can then find their way into the mouths and noses of people who are nearby or be potentially inhaled into the lungs. Currently, it is unclear if a person can become infected with COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes. Like most respiratory illnesses, COVID-19 infections can cause mild symptoms such as a runny nose, a sore throat, cough and fever. In more severe cases, it can result in pneumonia or breathing difficulties. Older people, as well as people with pre-existing medical conditions such as heart disease and diabetes, are more susceptible to severe illness upon infection with the virus. We urge the global public to follow these standard recommendations to prevent the spread of infection, which are:



1- Frequently wash your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub/soap and water, this regime can kill the virus if it is on your hands;

2- Maintain social distancing; keep a distance of at least 1 meter (3 feet) between yourself and other people, especially people who are sneezing, coughing or have a fever;

4- Seek medical care as soon as possible if you have a fever, cough and are experiencing difficulties in breathing;

3- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, as your hands may have had contact with a contaminated surface, and therefore transfer the virus from the surface to you;

5- Notify your healthcare professional if you recently travelled to an area in China, or elsewhere, where COVID-19 has been reported, or if you have been in close contact with someone who travelled to high risk areas and has respiratory symptoms;

6- Avoid the consumption of raw or undercooked animal products;

7- Handle raw meat, milk or animal organs with care so as to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods.

It is important to note that antibiotics do not work against viruses as they are only effective against bacterial infections. Being a virus, COVID-19 can't be prevented or treated using antibiotics and to date there are no recommended medicines to prevent or treat this novel coronavirus. There are some specific treatments that are under investigation and these will be tested through clinical trials. We hope for a positive outcome from these trials and have confidence in the global community to actively work together to curb the further transmission of the virus.



READ MORE

1. World Health Organization (WHO). "Coronavirus". <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
2. World Health Organization (WHO). " Q&A on coronaviruses". <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>
3. World Health Organization (WHO). "Statement on the second meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)" [https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov))
4. World Health Organization (WHO). "Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)" <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "How 2019-nCoV Spreads". <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>