What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is the name given to a new illness caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. This virus is a type of coronavirus.

COVID-19 can cause mild to severe illness, but for some people, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death.

The respiratory system is composed of organs that are involved in breathing.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms and Testing

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. It is spread from person to person through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks. People who are infected but do not have symptoms can also spread the virus.

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Congestion or runny nose
- Muscle or body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea

Testing for COVID-19 can be done in a variety of ways. The most common types of testing are:

- Nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs)
- Antigen tests
- Rapid tests

What if you test positive?

If you test positive for COVID-19, you should self-isolate and follow the advice of your healthcare provider. This may include:

- Quarantine
- Medications
- Oxygen therapy
- Intensive care

What if you test negative?

If you test negative for COVID-19, you should continue to follow the guidance of your healthcare provider. This may include:

- Isolation
- Medications
- Oxygen therapy
- Intensive care

Pre-existing Medical Conditions

People with certain medical conditions are at a higher risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19. This includes:

- Cancer
- Chronic respiratory (lung) disease
- Diabetes
- Cardiovascular (heart) disease
- Neuromuscular dysfunction
- Maternally inherited diabetes and deafness
- Spinal Cord Injuries
- Learning Disabilities
- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Congenital Malformations (birth defects)
- Cerebral palsy (a group of disorders or problems in the brain that can make it hard to move and that can affect a person’s speech and memory)
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

The risk of death from COVID-19 increases for people with these conditions and for those who are older.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

- World Health Organization
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Cancer Institute
- U.S. National Library of Medicine
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control