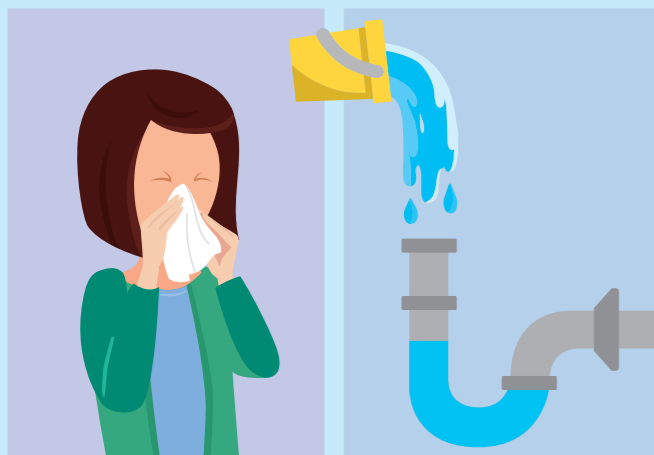


Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



Causative agent

“Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)” refers to the cluster of viral pneumonia cases occurring in Wuhan, Hubei Province, since December 2019. According to investigation by the Mainland health authorities, a novel coronavirus is found to be the causative agent.

Clinical features

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, malaise, dry cough and shortness of breath. Other symptoms include nasal congestion, headache, conjunctivitis, sore throat, diarrhoea, loss of taste or smell, skin rash or discolouration of fingers or toes. Some people become infected but only have very mild or non-specific symptoms. According to the World Health Organization, about 20% of the cases may develop serious illness with breathing difficulty. People of older age or having underlying diseases (e.g. hypertension, heart and lung problems, diabetes, or cancer) are at a higher risk of deterioration into serious condition.

Mode of transmission and incubation period

The main mode of transmission is through respiratory droplets, the virus can also be transmitted through contact. Most estimates of the incubation period range from 1 to 14 days, most commonly around 5 days.

Management

The main treatment is supportive.

Prevention

There is no vaccine for this infectious disease at the moment.

Health advice

Members of the public are urged to go out less and reduce social activities such as meals gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible.

To maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community:

- Surgical mask can prevent transmission of respiratory viruses from ill persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching one's mouth, nose or eyes; before eating; after using the toilet; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. When the hands are cleaned, do not touch the water tap directly again (for example, using a paper towel to wrap the faucet before turn it off). If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80% alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;

- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

Remark: Face mask is not recommended for children under the age of 2 years without supervision.



For the latest travel advice, please visit the thematic website (<https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html>).



Centre for Health Protection Website www.chp.gov.hk

Health Education Infoline of the Department of Health

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Revised on 25 May 2020