

COVID19- FAQs

This document outlines some frequently asked questions surrounding COVID-19.¹ Water Mission is well positioned to help prevent and mitigate misinformation. This document is intended for Water Mission field staff, to help answer questions that may come from communities we serve.

What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is an infectious disease. This new virus was unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Fever, tiredness, dry cough, and shortness of breath. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea.
- Some people become infected but do not develop any symptoms nor feel unwell. However, they can continue to spread the virus even without showing these symptoms.

What can I do to protect myself and prevent the spread of disease?

- **Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands** with soap and water for 20 seconds or clean them with an alcohol-based hand rub. Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
- **Maintain at least 2-meter (6 feet) distance between yourself and others**, as recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention². When someone coughs or sneezes, they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain the virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in these droplets, which also contain the COVID-19 virus.
- **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.** Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses.
- **Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze.** Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.
- **Stay home if you feel unwell.** If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

How likely am I to catch COVID-19?

- The risk depends on where you are - and more specifically, whether there is a COVID-19 outbreak unfolding there.

Who is at risk of developing severe illness?

- While we are still learning about how COVID-2019 affects people, older persons and persons with pre-existing medical conditions (such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes) appear to develop serious illness more often than others.

Are antibiotics effective in preventing or treating the COVID-19?

- No. Antibiotics do not work against viruses, they only work on bacterial infections. COVID-19 is caused by a virus, so antibiotics do not work.

¹ World Health Organization, "Q&A on coronavirus (COVID-19)", 9 March 2020, <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

² The World Health Organization recommends maintaining at least 1 meter (3 feet) of distance. Water Mission is following the more rigorous CDC guideline.

Are there any medicines or therapies that can prevent or cure COVID-19?

- There is no evidence that current medicine can prevent or cure the disease.

Is there a vaccine, drug or treatment for COVID-19?

- Not yet. To date, there is no vaccine and no specific antiviral medicine to prevent or treat COVID-2019

How long does the virus survive on surfaces?

- It is not certain how long the virus that causes COVID-19 survives on surfaces, but it seems to behave like other coronaviruses. Studies suggest that coronaviruses (including preliminary information on the COVID-19 virus) may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. This may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment).
- If you think a surface may be infected, clean it with simple disinfectant to kill the virus and protect yourself and others.

Does COVID-19 affect children?³

- This is a new virus and we do not know enough yet about how it affects children or pregnant women. We know it is possible for people of any age to be infected with the virus, but so far there have been relatively few cases of COVID-19 reported among children.

Can you protect yourself from COVID-19 by swallowing or gargling with bleach, taking acetic acid or steroids, or using essential oils, saltwater, ethanol or other substances?⁴

- No, none of these recommendations protect you from getting COVID-19, and some of these practices may be dangerous.
- The best ways to protect yourself are to consistently wash your hands, avoid touching your face, and maintaining a safe distance from other people who may be sick with the virus.

Is it true that the new coronavirus was deliberately created or released by people?

- False. The truth is that viruses can change over time. Occasionally, a disease outbreak happens when a virus that is common in an animal such as a pig, bat or bird undergoes changes and passes to humans. This is likely how the new coronavirus came to be.

Note

This is Version 2.0 developed on April 14, 2020. To make sure you are accessing the latest version, and to get other helpful resources, visit our [COVID-19 Resources](#) page.

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³ UNICEF, "Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): What parents should know", accessed 24 March, 2020
<https://www.unicef.org/stories/novel-coronavirus-outbreak-what-parents-should-know>

⁴ Johns Hopkins Medicine, "Coronavirus Disease 2019: Myth vs. Fact," accessed 23 March, 2020
<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/2019-novel-coronavirus-myth-versus-fact>