



# The Coronavirus Outbreak



## Answers to your most common questions:

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### o **What is a coronavirus?**

It is a novel virus named for the crownlike spikes that protrude from its surface. The coronavirus can infect both animals and people and can cause a range of respiratory illnesses from the common cold to more dangerous conditions like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS.

### o **How worried should I be?**

New outbreaks in Asia, Europe and the Middle East are renewing fears of a global pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned this week that Americans should brace for the likelihood that the virus will spread to the United States.

### o **How do I keep myself and others safe?**

Washing your hands frequently is the most important thing you can do, along with staying at home when you're sick.

### o **What if I'm traveling?**

The C.D.C. has warned older and at-risk travelers to avoid Japan, Italy and Iran. The agency also has advised against all nonessential travel to South Korea and China.

### o **How can I prepare for a possible outbreak?**

Keep a 30-day supply of essential medicines. Get a flu shot. Have essential household items on hand. Have a support system in place for elderly family members.

### o **Where has the virus spread?**

The virus, which originated in Wuhan, China, has sickened more than 80,000 people in at least 33 countries, including Italy, Iran and South Korea.

### o **How contagious is the virus?**

According to preliminary research, it seems moderately infectious, similar to SARS, and is probably transmitted through sneezes, coughs and contaminated surfaces. Scientists have estimated that each infected person could spread it to somewhere between 1.5 and 3.5 people without effective containment measures.

### o **Who is working to contain the virus?**

World Health Organization officials have been working with officials in China, where growth has slowed. But this week, as confirmed cases spiked on two continents, experts warned that the world was not ready for a major outbreak.