

Coronavirus 2019-nCoV: What You Need to Know

December 2019 saw the record of the first cases of pneumonia COVID-19 caused by the previously unknown coronavirus (2019-nCoV, SARS-CoV-2) in the Chinese city of Wuhan (Hubei Province). Most likely, the virus has spread from animals to humans and has acquired the ability to transfer from person to person by droplet infection. By March 2020, it managed to reach 6 continents, and the number of confirmed infections reached 110 000, of which about 81 000 in mainland China alone (as of March 9, 2020).

Coronavirus: What Is It?

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses transmitted by birds and mammals that cause respiratory infections. In most cases, the infections are mild, however, **some of the coronaviruses cause severe respiratory infections**. Coronaviruses include, in addition to viruses causing the common cold, also microorganisms that cause severe SARS and MERS disease.

What are the symptoms of the Wuhan coronavirus infection? Alarming is the appearance of fever and fatigue of the body, combined with a decrease in kidney function, diarrhoea, a decrease in the number of white blood cells, as well as a number of symptoms from the respiratory tract - the occurrence of abundant runny nose, sore throat, dry cough and shortness of breath. Coronavirus-induced COVID-19 disease can affect people of all ages, but older people with chronic diseases have been found to experience a much worse course. The treatment is symptomatic.

How Does Coronavirus Spread?

According to hypotheses, the Wuhan coronavirus is of animal origin and has probably transferred from animals to humans at one of the markets in Chinese Hubei Province. Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 **is transferred by droplet infection**, and can be easily spread in agglomerations of people, for example by sneezing or coughing. **Symptoms appear 2 to 14 days after infection**. People who have had direct contact with the sick are most at risk of illness, such as those who help patients in hospitals or meet infected people at work or in public places. On top of that, people returning from the region of the epidemic are at an increased risk group.

How to Avoid SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus Infection?

For this disease, as with other infectious diseases, the best **way to avoid infection is strict compliance with hygiene rules**. First of all, you should wash your hands with warm soapy water (at least 20 seconds) and avoid contact of unwashed hands with the mucous membrane (eyes, nose, mouth). Furthermore, it is recommended to avoid contact with sick people, as well as take extra care when contacting farm animals. Meat, fish, and seafood should be treated with heat for a long time (cooking, frying, baking). Following the rules is important because **there is currently no vaccine for this type of virus**.

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