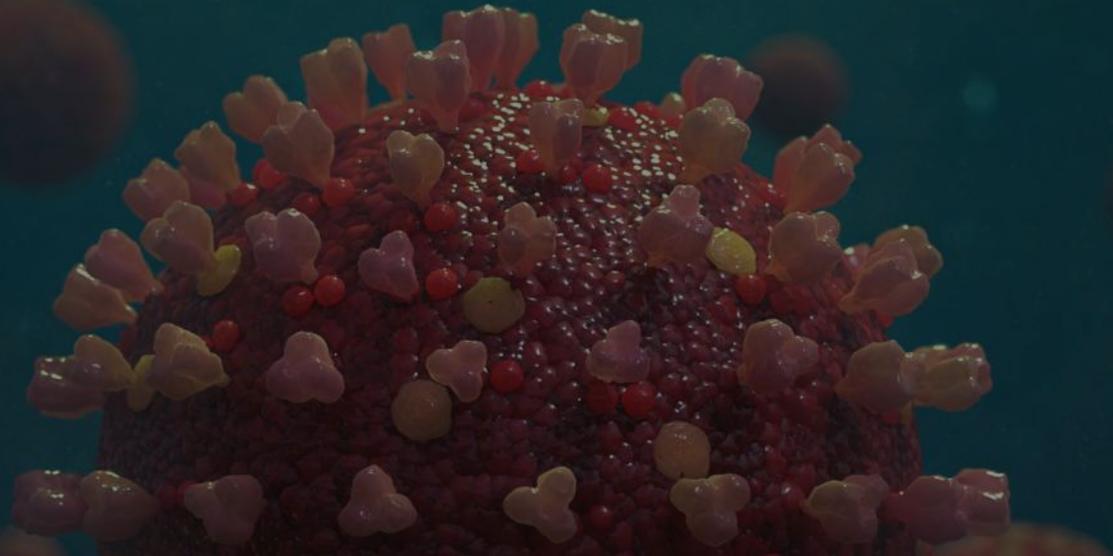


# CORONAVIRUS

What You Need to Know  
to Protect the Workplace



# ***TABLE OF CONTENTS***



Coronavirus: What You Need to Know to Protect the Workplace.....	3
What is Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)?.....	4
How it Began?.....	5
Where does the Virus Come From?.....	6
What are the Symptoms?.....	7
Can the Virus be Cured?.....	8
Health Experts Worried Over Inevitable Spread.....	9
United States Pandemic Preparedness.....	10
Recommended Strategies for Employers to Use Now.....	11-14



Whether reading an article or watching the news, there's one story dominating headlines - **coronavirus!**

Now that there are reported cases of COVID-19 (coronavirus disease) in the United States, employers should look for ways to protect their employees and workplace.

That's where you can help - **EDUCATION.**

This guide should serve as a resource for providing information on:

Safety

Employee  
health

Job  
functions

Business  
travel

Together, we can provide answers to the questions employees are asking.

A detailed 3D rendering of a coronavirus particle, showing its characteristic crown-like surface with numerous spike proteins. The particle is shown in a close-up, slightly angled view, with a soft blue and teal color palette. The background is a blurred, darker version of the same particle, creating a sense of depth.

# ***WHAT IS THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)?***

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Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

# HOW IT BEGAN?

*The first human cases were publicly reported from the Chinese city of Wuhan, where approximately 11 million people live, after medics first started publicly reporting infections on December 31, 2019.*

- By January 8, 59 suspected cases had been reported and seven people were in critical condition. Tests were developed for the new virus and recorded cases began to surge.
- To date, more than 80,000 people have been infected with the virus around the globe.
- Approximately 3,000 deaths have been associated with the virus.



# *WHERE DOES THE VIRUS COME FROM?*

According to scientists, the virus has almost certainly come from bats. Coronaviruses in general tend to originate in animals.

The first cases of COVID-19 came from people visiting or working in a live animal market in the city, which has since been closed down for investigation.

Although the market is officially a seafood market, other dead and living animals were

being sold there, including wolf cubs, salamanders, snakes, peacocks, porcupines and camel meat.

A study by the Wuhan Institute of Virology, published in February 2020 in the scientific journal Nature, found that the genetic make-up virus samples found in patients in China is 96% similar to a coronavirus they found in bats.

# WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Once someone has caught the COVID-19 virus it may take between two and 14 days, or even longer, for them to show any symptoms - but they may still be contagious during this time.

If and when they do become ill, typical signs include a runny nose, a cough, sore throat and a fever (high temperature). The vast majority of patients – at least 97%, based on available data - will recover from these without any issues or medical help.

In a small group of patients, who seem mainly to be the elderly or those with long-term illnesses, it can lead to pneumonia. Pneumonia is an infection in which the insides of the lungs swell up and fill with fluid. It makes it increasingly difficult to breathe and, if left untreated, can be fatal.

- Runny nose
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Fever
- Body aches
- Shortness of breath

# ***CAN THE VIRUS BE CURED?***

The COVID-19 cannot currently be cured and it is proving difficult to contain.

Antibiotics do not work against viruses. Antiviral drugs can be effective, but the process of understanding a virus then developing and producing medications for treatment take time.

Currently, governments and health authorities are working to contain the virus and to care for patients who are sick and stop them infecting other people.

People who catch the illness are being quarantined in hospitals, where their symptoms can be treated and they will be away from the uninfected public.

# HEALTH EXPERTS WORRIED OVER INEVITABLE SPREAD

According to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC), a spread of the COVID-19 in the United States may be inevitable.

*"It's not so much a question of if this will happen anymore, but rather more of a question of exactly when this will happen and how many people in this country will have severe illness."*

- Dr. Nancy Messonnier, Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.

Factors of greatest health concern continue to include:

**Rate virus is spreading**

**Lack of immunity as the public has not encountered it before**

This means it may be able to cause more damage than viruses we come across often, like the **flu** or **common cold**.

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# ***UNITED STATES PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS***

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While there have been a limited number of cases confirmed in the United States, health experts warn now is the time to make appropriate preparations should the coronavirus become a global pandemic.

*“We are asking the American public to work with us to prepare for the expectation that this could be bad,”* a top CDC official reported in a conference call outlining what schools and businesses will likely need to do if the COVID-19 starts to spread throughout the United States.

Dr. Nancy Messonnier, Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases suggested:

## ***SCHOOLS***

Consider dividing students into smaller groups or close and utilize internet-based teleschooling.

## ***BUSINESSES***

For adults, businesses can replace in-person meetings with video or telephone conferences and increase teleworking options.

## ***LOCAL COMMUNITIES/ CITIES***

Modify, postpone or cancel mass gatherings.

# ***RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYERS TO USE NOW***

The CDC recommends implementing the following strategies now to prevent spread of the virus in the workplace:

## ***Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.***

- Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.

## ***Separate sick employees.***

- CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately. Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available).

## ***Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees.***

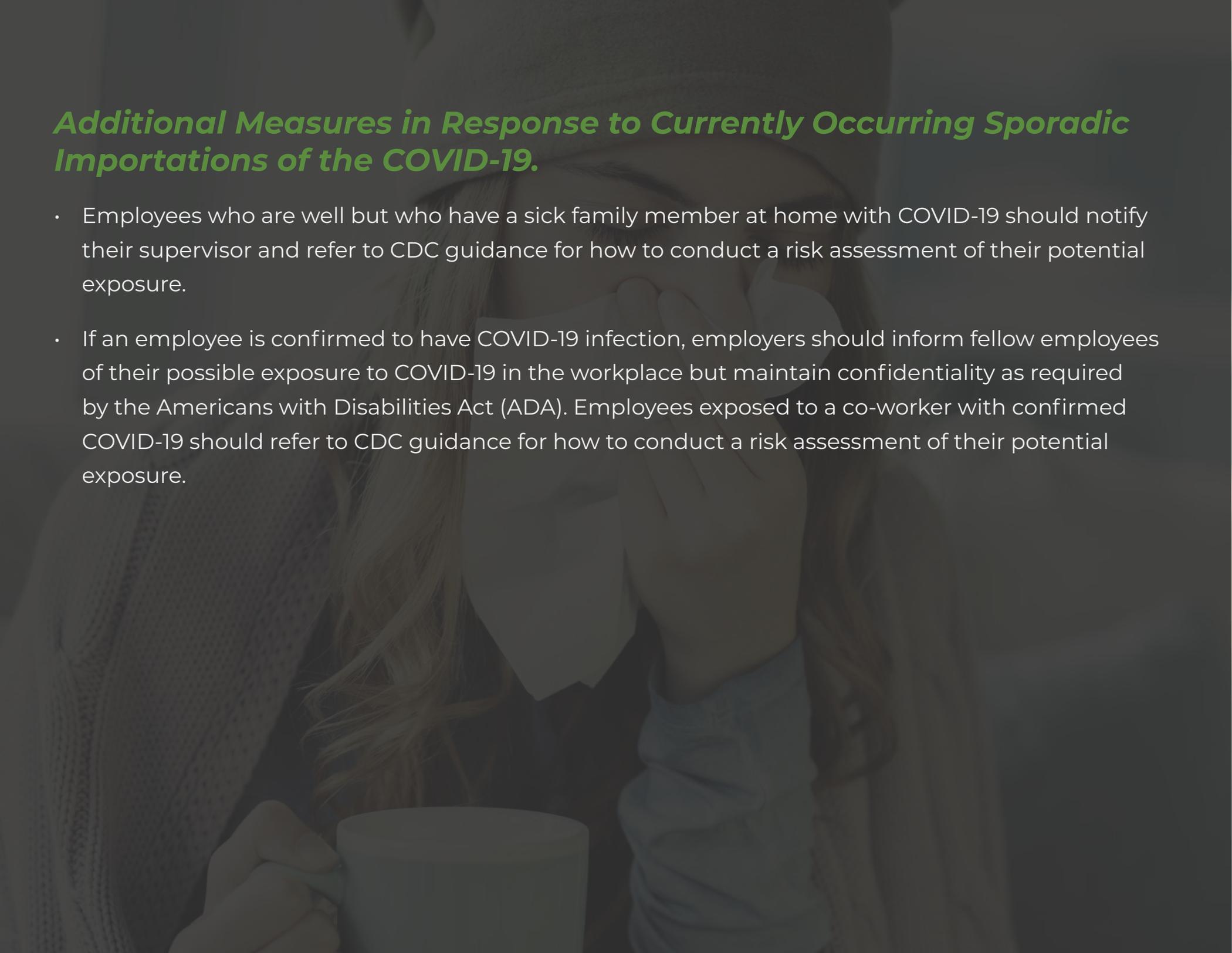
- Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.
- Instruct employees to clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol, or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
- Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained. Place hand rubs in multiple locations or in conference rooms to encourage hand hygiene.

## ***Perform routine environmental cleaning.***

- Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.

## ***Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps.***

- Check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from China, and information for aircrew, can be found on the CDC website.
- Advise employees to check themselves for symptoms of acute respiratory illness before starting travel and notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor and should promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.
- If outside the United States, sick employees should follow your company's policy for obtaining medical care or contact a healthcare provider or overseas medical assistance company to assist them with finding an appropriate healthcare provider in that country. A U.S. consular officer can help locate healthcare services. However, U.S. embassies, consulates, and military facilities do not have the legal authority, capability, and resources to evacuate or give medicines, vaccines, or medical care to private U.S. citizens overseas.



## ***Additional Measures in Response to Currently Occurring Sporadic Importations of the COVID-19.***

- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Employees exposed to a co-worker with confirmed COVID-19 should refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.