

The novel coronavirus that first emerged in Wuhan, China late last year has quickly spread around the globe, with the first case reported in the U.S. on Jan. 20. The virus can lead to a disease dubbed COVID-19, marked by respiratory problems that are usually mild (coughing, fever) but can be severe (pneumonia, trouble breathing)—especially in older adults and in people with underlying health conditions. Stay informed and protect your health with the [very latest from Consumer Reports](#).

### Coronavirus FAQs

There have been a growing number of cases and deaths in the U.S. reported by the CDC and local health departments, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally. But the risk for acquiring this infection right now is still relatively low. [Here's what you need to know about the coronavirus](#) - from symptoms and stats to best prevention measures.

### Wash your hands the right way

One of the most important steps to preventing the spread of viral and bacterial infections is also the simplest: washing your hands. The medical community and the CDC agree that washing your hands—the right way and at the right time—eliminates germs before they can make you sick. [Follow our experts' hand-washing guidelines](#).

### What about a mask?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization, healthy people don't need one. That includes plain, loose-fitting masks sometimes called surgical masks; tighter-fitting N95 respirators, which filter out 95 percent of airborne particles; and reusable face masks sometimes advertised as dust masks. [Find out why face masks don't prevent the spread of coronavirus](#), and what you can do instead that's more effective.

### How coronavirus could affect travel

If you have upcoming travel plans, or are ready to book your travel, [here's what you should do](#) if you are traveling outside the US to protect your health and lower your risk of losing money.

### What you need if quarantined

You may have seen news reports showing empty store shelves that used to hold antiseptic wipes, hand sanitizers, and even toilet paper. How should you prepare for a possible quarantine without creating panic and impacting others? Here's our [list of what you may need - and what you don't - if you're quarantined at home](#).