



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Coronavirus (COVID-19): If You Think You're Sick

While things like coughing and fever usually aren't major causes for concern, they are two of the symptoms of the new coronavirus (COVID-19), which was declared a global pandemic in March 2020. If you're feeling unwell, or if you suspect you came into contact with the virus, it's important to talk to a healthcare professional. Providing the right information and asking the right questions during your conversation will help determine whether or not you need a diagnostic test.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

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| Coronavirus | The term "coronavirus" encompasses a whole family of viruses, most of which cause the common cold. But some strains of coronavirus, including MERS, SARS, and now, COVID-19, are much more serious. |
| Dyspnea | Shortness of breath. |
| Ground-glass opacities | Lung infections or diseases—including COVID-19—commonly appear on a CT scan or X-ray as inflammation that makes it look like the lungs are obscured by ground glass. |
| Incubation period | The time between contracting a virus and when symptoms start. For COVID-19, the CDC estimates the incubation period is between 2 to 14 days. |
| Nasopharyngeal swab | A swab of the back of the nasal passages for diagnostic purposes. |
| Oropharyngeal swab | A swab of the throat for diagnostic purposes. |
| Pulmonary consolidation | When lung tissue fills with fluid or semi-solid material instead of air. This potential indicator of COVID-19 can be detected on an X-ray or CT scan. |
| Sputum sample | A sample of the mucus secreted by cells in the lower airways of the respiratory tract. Sputum is also called phlegm. |
| SARS-CoV-2 | The particular strain of coronavirus causing the COVID-19 disease. |
| Tachypnea | Rapid breathing. |



Information to Tell Your Doctor

In addition to a symptom evaluation, the answers to these questions can help you and your doctor get a bigger picture of your condition.

- Have you experienced a cough, fever, and/or shortness of breath?
- Do you have a chronic condition, like heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes?
- Have you had close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- Have you traveled anywhere in the 2 weeks before symptoms started?
- How long have you been experiencing symptoms?

Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best address your symptoms.

About Symptoms

- How can I tell if my symptoms are related to something like a cold or the flu rather than COVID-19?
- How will my symptoms progress? Will they gradually get worse?
- Is it possible for these symptoms to go away on their own?

About Diagnosis

- Am I eligible for a COVID-19 test?
- What happens during the test?
- When will I get my test results?
- What other labs or imaging tests can I expect?
- Are there any tests I should get to see if I have something other than COVID-19?



Questions to Ask (continued)

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best address your symptoms.

About Treatment

- Will I need to be admitted to the hospital if I have COVID-19?
- Are there medications I can take to ease my symptoms?
- Are there any medications I shouldn't take?

About Avoiding the Spread of Infection

- Do I need to wear a mask?
- Do I need to isolate myself from others?
- Should my family/people I'm close with seek testing?

