COVID-19 - Know All About Coronavirus Disease | Narayana Health

The origins of COVID-19: Where did it start?

There is a new coronavirus strain that has spread over the past two months and it is now known as COVID-19. The strain was first faced in Wuhan, China in December 2019, and it has now spread over eighty countries across the world and infected 93,000 people, out of which 3,000 are reported dead.

People have begun panicking about this virus strain because it can cause pneumonia and once diagnosed there is no cure for it. Patients who have contracted COVID-19 are reported to suffer from cough, fever, and shortness of breath; severe cases have reported organ failure.

The pneumonia is viral, which means antibiotic medications are of no use and the antiviral drugs that are used for the common flu may not work too. It’s highly suggested that if you notice the initial symptoms, that is cough and fever, visit the hospital as soon as possible. This way you will get support for your lungs and other organs along with essential fluids that will help you recover; also, the speed of recovery depends on your immune system, and patients who have died due to COVID-19 were already suffering from poor health.

This strain of coronavirus was named COVID-19 on the 11th of February by the World Health Organization. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director of WHO, mentioned that they had to find a name that didn’t point out any animal, geographical location, a person, or a group of people. The name should be easily pronounceable and had a clear relation to the disease. It’s important to have an impartial name so that other names don’t get stigmatized.
There is still more data that needs to be collected about COVID-19 that states how dangerous it is, and right now the mortality rate is around 2%. In comparison, the seasonal flu has a mortality rate below one percent and it is known to cause around four hundred thousand deaths annually, all over the globe. SARS had a death rate that rose to more than ten percent.

Another unknown point, that scientists are still figuring out, is how contagious COVID-19 is right now. The main difference between this strain and the common flu is there is no vaccine developed for it yet. This makes it difficult for vulnerable members of the population, specifically the elderly and patients who have immune/respiratory problems. It’s extremely important that you keep washing your hands whenever possible and avoid large crowds, especially if you feel unwell.

Another sensible precautionary step is to take a flu vaccine, this will reduce the load on health services if the outbreak turns into an epidemic in your area. COVID-19, just like other coronavirus strains, originated from animals and then spread to humans.

The patients who were initially affected by the virus worked or shopped in the Wuhan wet markets or seafood wholesale markets, which were located in the center of the city; this is also where live animals and newly slaughtered produce was sold. The health commission of China has confirmed that the virus can spread from animal to human and human to human contact as well.

When new and troubling virus strains originate they usually come from animal hosts. Ebola, the flu, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) are caused by coronavirus strains that came from animals. In 2002, the SARS epidemic went pretty much unchecked and spread to thirty-seven countries. It caused a global hysteria, and the disease infected more than eight thousand people, out of which 750 were reported dead. The MERS disease was less contagious from human to human, but if a patient was diagnosed with it, they would be in more danger because it killed thirty-five percent of the 2,500 patients who were infected.

How to protect yourself from COVID-19?

Below are some of the ways by which you can avoid getting infected from coronavirus:

Wash your hands – Wet your hands in clean running water, apply a good antiseptic hand wash/soap, and lather your hands thoroughly. Massage the backs of the hands, between your fingers, and under your nails. Ensure that you scrub your hands for twenty seconds at least, and then rinse off the soap.

Cover your mouth – If you feel like sneezing or coughing, then you have to cover your mouth while doing so. Use a tissue and throw it away once used, if you don’t have a tissue to cover your mouth then sneeze or cough into the elbow, instead of using your hands.
Use face masks – Face masks can offer some amount of protection because they can block liquid droplets. But, they don’t block aerosol particles that pass through the mask’s material.

Be Proactive – If you feel that you’re getting the symptoms of COVID-19, then you should seek early medical help by phone. Also, don’t forget to share your travel history with your doctor.

Self Quarantine – If you have traveled to any of the affected parts like China, South Korea, Iran, or Italy in the last two weeks, then you should stay indoors for the next 14 days. This also means that you should not commute to work or school, and avoid public areas as well. If you have returned from an infected location and you begin to develop a high fever, runny nose, sore throat, or have difficulty breathing, then don’t leave your home under any circumstance until your doctor says it’s okay to head out.

Covid-19: What’s the latest update?

The WHO has declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. According to the WHO, a pandemic is a “worldwide spread of diseases”. The virus spreading outside China is worrying, but it was not unexpected. The WHO has now declared a public state of emergency, of international concern. The key problems of coronavirus are how transmissible it is between humans and the number of people who can get severely ill and end up in the hospital. Usually, viruses that spread easily tend to have a mild impact. It has been noticed that people with weak immune systems tend to be severe, and there are few cases in children as well.