What is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus (nCoV), meaning that it is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

How can COVID-19 be prevented?

Respiratory etiquette should be used for all respiratory infections, including COVID-19. This includes avoiding contact with others, covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing (or sneezing into the crook of your elbow), washing your hands or using sanitizer, cleaning and disinfecting objects that may be contaminated, and avoiding sharing food or drinks with others.

Should I get tested for COVID-19?

If you develop symptoms such as fever, cough and/or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or have recently traveled internationally or on a cruise, stay home and call your healthcare provider. Older patients and individuals who have severe underlying medical conditions should contact their healthcare provider early, even if their illness is mild. Your provider will determine if you have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and whether you should be tested.

What about international travel and cruises?

To slow the spread of COVID-19 into the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is working with state and local public health partners to implement after-travel health precautions. Depending on your travel history, you will be asked to stay home for a period of 14 days from the time you left an international destination or cruise.

Who do I contact if I think I think I may have COVID-19?

If you feel you need medical care, please call your primary care provider. For more information, you can call the Florida Department of Health Hotline at 1.866.779.6121 (open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.).

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