

# **CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)**

## **How COVID-19 Spreads**

Current understanding about how the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 spreads is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. COVID-19 is a new disease and there is more to learn about how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes and to what extent it may spread in the US.

### **Person-to-person spread**

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

### **Spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects**

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

### **Can someone spread the virus without being sick?**

- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

### **How easily does the virus spread?**

- The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (“community spread”) in some affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.