Understanding Covid-19

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Background

Covid-19 is the name of the disease caused by the novel coronavirus. It is called novel because it is new. We have never seen this virus before. Covid-19 stands for **Co**rona**vi**rus **d**isease, 20**19**. The virus probably came from animals, but it is now spreading from person to person.

Scientists first discovered the virus in Wuhan, China. Then it started spreading all over the world. The first case of Covid-19 in the U.S. was reported on January 21, 2020. By May 2020, the U.S. had more cases than any other country.

How Does Covid-19 Spread?

Coronavirus is a respiratory illness that spreads between people who are in close contact with one another. If an infected person coughs, sneezes, or exhales, the small drops that come out of the infected person's mouth or nose contain the virus. If another person breathes in those drops, they could get the virus. You can also get Covid-19 by touching something that has the virus on it and then touching your own mouth, nose, or eyes.

What are the Symptoms?

Covid-19 affects different people in different ways. Symptoms appear 2-14 days after infection and can include mild to severe versions of:

- Fever and chills, muscle and body aches
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Some patients develop pneumonia, and sometimes they die. Some people might not be sick at all, but they still might be contagious. These people are called *asymptomatic carriers*.

How Can You Protect Yourself?

You can protect yourself from respiratory illness with these preventive actions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wear a mask.

To slow the spread of the disease, experts recommend that we stay in quarantine. For me, this means I can't work, and I can't interview for a job. I can't visit family and friends or go shopping. The worst part is I can't hug anyone. I am a big hugger, and I miss the physical contact. I especially miss my grandson who gives me never-ending love, but now I don't see him often.

To stay safe, you should keep reading and learning about what doctors recommend. Make sure you can trust the information that you read. I receive my information from reliable sources such as: the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization.

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AFTER YOU READ: Briefly state in your own words what kind of illness the coronavirus causes and what you can do to protect yourself from it.