

# Keeping Lung Disease Patients Safe From COVID-19

## What Does “Coronavirus” Mean, and what is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are named after the crown-like bumps that cover their surfaces. This group of viruses can cause a variety of illnesses, from very serious (SARS) to not so serious (the common cold).

In late 2019, a novel (new) coronavirus was discovered. It is called COVID-19. If a person gets infected with it, the illness can be severe. As of March 13, 2020, 152 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed. Thousands of cases have been confirmed worldwide.

## Keeping Lung Disease Patients Safe

Respiratory infections can be especially dangerous for people who are affected by lung disease. This is true for influenza (the flu), and its true for novel coronavirus COVID-19.

Together, we can slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect people who are living with asthma, COPD, lung cancer, and other lung diseases. Here's how:

### 1. Wash Your Hands

Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and running water are not available. Handwashing is the easiest thing you can do to reduce your risk. Keep surfaces in your home and workplace clean, too. Pay special attention to objects in high traffic areas, like handrails and doorknobs. Don't forget to frequently clean your mobile devices.

### 2. Keep Your Distance

When someone coughs or sneezes, they spray small liquid droplets from the nose and mouth. If you're too close, you could breathe them in – along with the viruses they contain. This is the main way that the COVID-19 virus is spreading, so keep your distance from people who are coughing and sneezing. You may wish to avoid crowded public spaces, when possible. Check current travel advisories before your departure.

If you develop symptoms like fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, keep your distance from coworkers and schoolmates by staying home, and avoid public spaces. Seek medical care early. Call your healthcare provider in advance, and follow their directions. If your symptoms are very severe, visit your local Emergency department

### 3. Hands Off!

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. This is another common way that viruses enter your body.

### 4. Please Sneeze Responsibly

Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw away your used tissue immediately, and wash your hands right away.

### 5. Follow Your Action Plan. Always

If you have a chronic lung condition like asthma or COPD, preventing flare-ups or exacerbations can keep you out of the hospital – and therefore, keep you away from people who are seeking care for suspected COVID-19 or flu. Continue to follow your asthma action plan or COPD action plan, and continue to take your medications as prescribed.