COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China. It is a new strain that was not previously seen in humans. COVID-19 is its formal name.

How is it spread?
- Through droplets from coughing and sneezing.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

Symptoms?
Illnesses can be mild, or in some cases, be severe enough to require hospitalization.

- Fever
- Shortness of breath
- Bluish lips or face
- New Confusion

Severe complications can include:
- Pneumonia in both lungs
- Multi-organ failure and
- In some cases, death

Who's at greater risk of getting COVID-19?
People who have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or people who live in or have recently been in a geographic area with ongoing spread are at an increased risk of exposure. Those at greater risk of having severe symptoms, including death are:

- Older adults (anyone over the age of 60)
- People who have chronic medical conditions like:
  - Heart disease
  - Diabetes
  - Lung disease
If you are at greater risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, you should:

- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer when you can’t wash your hands.
- Avoid crowds as much as possible.
- Stock up on essential supplies, including medications.
- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others and avoid shaking hands.
- Avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel.
- During a COVID-19 outbreak in your community, stay home as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed.
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.

How is Coronavirus related to smoking and vaping?

When someone’s lungs are exposed to the flu or other infections, the negative effects of smoking or vaping are much more serious than among people who do not smoke or vape. Because exposure to tobacco and tobacco products impairs the body’s ability to fight off infection, people should stop smoking, vaping and avoid secondhand exposure as much as possible.

If you think you have COVID-19:

Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms AND have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, going to the bathroom and before eating or preparing food.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, stay home when you are sick and cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

How to protect yourself:

To get the most up-to-date information about cases in Arkansas, go to www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus. ADH has activated a call center to answer questions about COVID-19. That number is 1-800-803-7847. After normal business hours, urgent calls needing immediate response, please call 501-661-2136.