Wondering what you should do to protect yourself and your co-workers from the potential spread of the new coronavirus (COVID-19)? Below are some tips to stop the spread of COVID-19 or other viral infections in the workplace.

How does the new coronavirus spread? Although health experts are still learning the details about how it spreads, the virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may also be possible to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

How can you protect yourself at work? The best way to protect yourself is to avoid exposure and use simple prevention methods used for other viruses like colds and flu:

- Wash your hands! Wash them often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or about the time it takes to sing the ABCs. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. See https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/videos.html
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid close contact with co-workers; utilize alternative methods to in-person meetings when feasible.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, then throw your tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect your office surfaces regularly.
- Avoid touching high-touch surfaces in your work area such as elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, and bathroom fixtures/toilets.
- Avoid sharing common workplace tools such as ink pens, laptops, keyboards, or phones.

How can I help fight a virus and lessen the severity of the illness? The best way to fight viruses is to practice healthy living habits on an ongoing basis such as:

- Make healthy food and beverage choices from all five food groups including fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy to get the nutrients you need.
- Find time to get in at least 30 minutes of physical activity 3-5 times per week. When possible, enjoy your activity outdoors or in a less populated area. If using a gym, follow cleaning guidelines after use of the equipment.
- Get plenty of rest, at least the recommended 7 hours of sleep per night, or more or less depending on your age.

Who is at risk? The risk to the general public is low. Higher-risk populations are:

- People who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members.
- People who have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Learn more about places with ongoing spread at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html#geographic.
- Older adults and those with serious health conditions (heart disease, diabetes, lung disease and any condition that affects the immune system).

What are the symptoms? Most people will have mild effects from the virus, but can cause severe illness and pneumonia in others. People diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus reported symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Symptoms include:

- Fever (100.4 or greater)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

What should you do if you have symptoms? If you have symptoms, please stay home! If the symptoms require medical attention, seek a healthcare provider. If you have been in direct contact with someone who has been confirmed with the COVID-19 virus and you develop symptoms, notify your healthcare provider. Supply them with information regarding your symptoms and that you have had contact with a confirmed case. Do not go to your healthcare provider or an emergency room without contacting your provider or the emergency room first so they may take precautions to protect you and others.

What are the treatments? There are no specific treatments for illnesses caused by human coronaviruses. Although most people will recover on their own, you can do some things to help relieve your symptoms, including:

- Take medications to relieve pain and fever
- Use a room humidifier or take a hot shower to help ease a sore throat and cough
- If you are mildly sick, drink plenty of fluids, stay home, and get plenty of rest

For more information, go to:

https://www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html