



Del Mar Caregiver Resource Center
A program of Health Projects Center

What Exactly are Coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can infect both humans and animals. The first human coronavirus popped up in the mid-1960s. To date, there are seven (7) coronaviruses that can infect people.

The newest (2019) coronavirus (COVID-19) was first detected in China in late December, 2019.

You may also hear the virus referred to as “Novel Coronavirus” because:

- NOVEL = NEW (never seen before)
- Corona = CROWN (named for the crown like spikes on the virus).

Other coronaviruses you may have heard of include:

- SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), and
- MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)

Where did COVID-19 come from?

Experts believe the newest coronavirus began in an animal in China. Both MERS and SARs originated in bats. Researchers are fairly certain the virus was spread from animals to humans. The virus was then able to transmit from person to person.

Who is at risk for infection?

While anyone of any age, race, or gender can become infected by COVID-19, the average age of people with confirmed cases is 56 years old. Older adults who have other medical conditions, such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease are at higher risk of serious illness.

Source: In the Know, (2020)