CDC Launches Online Coronavirus Symptom Self-Checker

A bot named Clara helps Americans determine whether they need medical care for COVID-19.

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has created a coronavirus self-checker for use by those wondering whether they're experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

According to the CDC, the purpose of the self-checker, a bot named Clara, is to help make decisions about seeking appropriate medical care. But the system is not meant to diagnose or provide treatment options for COVID-19 or other conditions.

The first question Clara asks is, "Are you ill or caring for someone who is ill?" While those who answer no are redirected to COVID-19 resources, those who respond yes are prompted to answer a series of detailed questions. But first users are required to provide their age, gender and location as well as reveal whether they're taking the assessment for themselves or someone else.

The CDC’s new coronavirus symptom self-checker is a bot named Clara.Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Next, Clara asks whether the person who is sick is experiencing extreme difficulty breathing, blue-colored lips or face, severe and constant pain or pressure in the chest, severe and constant dizziness or lightheadedness, confusion, slurred speech or unconsciousness or has suffered a seizure.

If users select any of the above-mentioned symptoms, Clara advises them to call 911 because immediate medical attention is needed. Users must also inform the 911 operator whether they have come into contact with someone known to have COVID-19 or have recently traveled to an area where the illness is spreading.

Part of the CDC's coronavirus self-checkerCenter for Disease Control and Prevention

Clara arrives at a time when many states are complaining about insufficient testing, according to CNN.

Government and health officials predict that the number of COVID-19 cases will continue to grow across the United States. However, Clara may be able to help health care providers prioritize patients based on how urgently they need care.

For related coverage, read "Why Is Getting a Coronavirus Test So Hard?" and "A State-by-State Guide to the Novel Coronavirus." For more on the coronavirus, click here.

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