

## Quick Facts: 5G Wireless Technology and Health

### What is 5G?

- “Fifth Generation” or latest mobile phone technology, first widely deployed in 2019.<sup>1</sup>
- It is based on the same technology as 4G, but operates at a higher frequency. This higher frequency is currently covered by FCC exposure guidelines.<sup>2</sup>

### Does 5G cause or exacerbate COVID-19?

- **No.** The virus that causes COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets. Viruses cannot travel on radio waves or mobile networks. COVID-19 is spreading in many countries that do not have 5G mobile networks.<sup>3</sup> 5G has no effect on disease process or health outcomes related to COVID-19.<sup>4</sup>

### Are there cancer risks associated with 5G?

- The risk to the general public is considered to be low at the frequencies to which humans are exposed in the course of daily life.
- Cell phones transmit information using a form of non-ionizing (low frequency) electromagnetic radiation known as radio frequency radiation. Animal studies have suggested a possible carcinogenic effect from radio frequency radiation (RFR), but those studies measured exposure levels greater than what people likely receive from mobile devices.<sup>5</sup>
- There is currently no consistent evidence that non-ionizing radiation increases cancer risk in humans.<sup>6</sup> Although most studies are based on earlier technologies such as 2G, 3G, or 4G, the FDA reports that there are no new implications for 5G as it operates at a frequency already covered by exposure guidelines.<sup>2</sup>
- Given that the introduction of 5G is relatively new, additional research into potential effects is ongoing.

### Are there other health risks associated with 5G?

- Studies of memory, learning, and cognitive function have generally produced inconsistent results. The most consistent health risk associated with cell phone use is distracted driving and vehicle accidents.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/5g-mobile-networks-and-health>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/radiation-emitting-products/cell-phones/scientific-evidence-cell-phone-safety>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.icnirp.org/en/activities/news/news-article/covid-19.html>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/materials/cell\\_phone\\_radiofrequency\\_radiation\\_studies\\_508.pdf](https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/materials/cell_phone_radiofrequency_radiation_studies_508.pdf)