



## CURRENT UPDATES ON 2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- [California Department of Public Health](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)

FEBRUARY 25, 2020

This update is intended to address questions we've recently received from the community.

- **What is a coronavirus?**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses named for the crown-like spikes that protrude from their surface. Coronaviruses can infect both animals and people, and can cause a range of respiratory illnesses from the common cold to more dangerous conditions. The current concern is about a novel (new) coronavirus that has not been previously identified that causes an illness called COVID-19.

- **How contagious is the virus?**

According to preliminary research, it seems moderately infectious. The virus appears to spread mainly from person-to-person: Between people who are in close contact with one another (i.e., within about 6 feet), and via

respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Much is still being learned about how contagious the virus is, when it is contagious, and for how long.

- **Where has the virus spread?**

The virus appears to have originated in Wuhan, China, and has sickened tens of thousands of people in China and at least three dozen other countries. A current list of locations with confirmed COVID-19 cases can be found at [the CDC's website](#).

- **How worried should I be?**

Currently, the risk to the general population in the US is still considered low from COVID-19 and it should be noted that the flu season is still ongoing and the flu season has been difficult and has caused a lot of illness and death in the US. However, worry and fears about the potential for novel coronavirus to spread in the US in the future is understandable. It is recommended people keep updated on the evolving and expanding situation by following reliable sources of information such as the California Department of Public Health or CDC websites as guidance may change (links below).

- **Are we working to contain the virus?**

Yes, this week, a team of experts from the World Health Organization arrived in Beijing to offer their assistance, and here in the US, the CDC is working with each state, including the California Department of Public Health, who is in turn working with every local health jurisdiction in the state. While these collective efforts have been very successful to date, we are also planning for eventual local transmission and sustained community transmission.

- **Has there been community transmission in the United States?**

Those in the U.S. who have been infected with the virus were either exposed in China or have been very close contacts of those who are ill. There has been no reported community transmission in the US to date, which is why the risk to most Californians is very low. However, it is possible that there will be community transmission at some point. When community transmission within the US occurs, we will rapidly update the community.

- **How do I keep myself and others safe?**

Washing your hands frequently is the most important thing you can do, along with covering your cough or sneeze, avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, and staying at home when you're sick.

- **How can I stay informed?**

To keep track of the rapidly evolving COVID-19 issue, please check [the California Department of Public Health](#) and [the CDC websites](#) that regularly post updates in English and Spanish.

## PREVIOUS UPDATES

FEBRUARY 14, 2020

The Nevada County Public Health Department (NCPHD) has received inquiries regarding the significant rise in cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) reported out of mainland China. The worry is understandable and NCPHD encourages our community members to follow this evolving situation, to get the facts from reliable sources (references below), and to

take everyday precautions to reduce their risk of viral respiratory infections such as the flu.

As of February 13, 2020 there have been 15 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in all of the United States, and there is *no known community transmission of the virus in the US*. Infected persons in the US were either exposed while in China or have been very close contacts (such as in the same household) of ill, laboratory-confirmed cases.

Recent travelers who have visited mainland China are screened at the airport and given information about restricting their movements, monitoring their health, and contacting their provider and local health department should they feel ill within 14 days of leaving mainland China. So, vigorous and aggressive efforts are being made to identify individuals who may have been exposed to novel coronavirus and reduce the chance of spread to others.

Accurate information can help reduce fears and we can all take steps to collectively protect our community. NCPHD recommends the following to protect against all respiratory illnesses:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the restroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then toss the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth especially with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Get a flu vaccine to prevent influenza if you have not already done so this flu season.
- Follow CDC travel advisories.

- *If you have travelled to China within the past 14 days* or have been in close contact with an ill person who has laboratory-confirmed novel coronavirus (this will be rare in the US), please follow quarantine guidance and contact your provider and NCPHD if you develop symptoms so you can be safely evaluated without exposing others.
- Please do not hoard face masks or N95 respirators. Facemasks are most effective to limit spread when used by people who are sick. The greatest need for N95 respirators is for the appropriate use by health care workers.

Again, there is no current community spread of novel coronavirus in the United States, so the risk to the general public remains low. The NCPHD will continue to have close communication with state and federal health officials and with our local health care providers as new information and guidance becomes available.

To follow the COVID-19 situation, check with these reliable sources for the latest accurate information on novel coronavirus:

- [California Department of Public Health](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)

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