

2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



The North Carolina Division of Public Health is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local public health partners to prepare for possible cases of respiratory illness in North Carolina caused by a new coronavirus (2019-nCoV). The novel coronavirus was first identified in Wuhan, in the Hubei province of China, in December 2019. At present, most cases have been in people who live in or traveled to Wuhan. We believe the risk of person-to-person transmission to the general public in the United States is low at this time.

Q: What is a coronavirus?

A: Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illness in animals and humans. Human coronaviruses commonly circulate in the United States, and usually cause upper respiratory symptoms such as a cough or runny nose. Some coronaviruses can cause more serious illness, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV).

Q: How are coronaviruses transmitted?

A: Person-to-person transmission of coronaviruses such as SARS and MERS occur through droplets of respiratory secretions that are spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes. This is similar to how other respiratory viruses are spread, such as the flu or viruses that cause the common cold. The risk of coronaviruses spreading from touching objects such as door handles is low.

Q: What are the symptoms of coronaviruses?

A: Coronaviruses that commonly circulate in the United States cause symptoms similar to the flu and typically cause mild to moderate respiratory illness. Common symptoms include:

- Runny nose
- Headache
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Fever
- Shortness of breath

Q: Is 2019-nCoV the same as the MERS-CoV or SARS virus?

A: No. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in humans and others cause illness in animals, including camels and bats. The recently emerged 2019-nCoV is not the same as the coronavirus that causes MERS or the coronavirus that causes SARS.

Q: What is the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?

A: On Dec. 31, 2019, Chinese authorities reported an outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan, China. The cause of this outbreak was identified to be a new coronavirus, named 2019-nCoV. Cases were initially diagnosed in Wuhan, China, and in a small number of people who traveled through Wuhan to other destinations in China and other countries, including the United States. The first U.S. case was reported in a traveler returning from Wuhan on Jan. 21, 2020 in Washington state.

Q: What is the source of this new virus?

A: The source is not currently known. Many initial cases had visited an animal and seafood market in Wuhan in the days prior to becoming ill. In the past, other coronaviruses such as SARS and MERS have resulted from the transmission of animal coronaviruses to humans.

Q: How serious is 2019-nCoV?

A: The severity is currently unknown. There have been reports of severe illness, with a small percentage resulting in death in China. However, most cases have had mild illness and have been sent home from the hospital or have not required hospitalization.

Q: Am I at risk?

A: The immediate health risk from 2019-nCoV to the general American public who has not traveled to Wuhan is considered low at this time. Respiratory symptoms alone are not an indicator for 2019-nCoV. Illnesses including Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and influenza are increasingly common at this time of year. People should take precautions to protect themselves from other circulating respiratory viruses such as influenza and RSV. Precautions should include frequent hand washing, avoiding touching your face, covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze, and making sure you have gotten your annual flu shot.

Q: Have there been any cases of 2019-nCoV in the United States?

A: Yes. Cases of 2019-nCoV are growing internationally and in the United States. To view the latest statistics in the United States, please visit the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>

Q: What should I do if I traveled to Wuhan and feel sick?

A: Persons who are experiencing symptoms such as a fever, cough or shortness of breath and have visited Wuhan or had close contact with someone who is suspected to be infected with the novel coronavirus in the past 14 days should seek immediate medical attention.

- Before you go to the doctor's office, emergency room or urgent care, call ahead and tell them your symptoms and recent travel history.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Do not travel while sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Q: How is novel coronavirus diagnosed?

A: The CDC has developed a laboratory test for this virus. The test will soon be provided to State Public Health Laboratories. The new coronavirus will not be detected by commercially available tests, including those that can detect other coronaviruses.

If a person is suspected to be infected with novel coronavirus, healthcare providers should notify their local or state health department to coordinate testing.

Q: How can I get tested for 2019-nCoV?

A: Testing for 2019-nCoV is not available through commercial laboratories. At this time, diagnostic testing for 2019-nCoV is only being conducted at the CDC. State and local health departments are working with the CDC to perform coronavirus testing for persons who meet the CDC risk assessment criteria for testing.

Q: What should I do if I recently traveled to Wuhan, but do not feel sick?

A: If you have recently traveled to Wuhan but do not feel ill, you should monitor yourself for symptoms. If you develop symptoms within 14 days of travel to Wuhan, you should contact a healthcare provider by phone before going to their office.

Q: What should I do if I have an upcoming trip to Wuhan?

A: Please visit the U.S. State Department website for the latest travel recommendations:
<https://www.state.gov/>

Q: Should I be concerned about pets or other animals contracting 2019-nCoV?

A: While this virus seems to have emerged from an animal source in Wuhan, it is now spreading via person-to-person contact. The CDC recommends that people traveling to China avoid animals both live and dead, but there is no reason to think that animals or pets in the United States might be affected by this new coronavirus.

Q: What should healthcare providers do?

A: If you are a healthcare provider and suspect your patient may be infected with the novel coronavirus, you should use standard contact and airborne precautions and eye protection. Please immediately notify infection control and your local health department or the state Communicable Disease Branch at 919-733-3419.

Q: Is there a vaccine for 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?

A: No. Currently there is no vaccine to protect against the 2019 novel coronavirus.

*For the most up-to-date information,
visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.*



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