

Novel Coronavirus (nCoV)

FAQs - February 2020

Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) nCoV website: [Corona Virus](#)

or go to coronavirus.tarrantcounty.com

TCPH nCoV hotline: (817) 248-6299

Disease Basics

What is a novel coronavirus?

- A novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified.

What is 2019 novel coronavirus?

- The 2019 novel coronavirus, or 2019-nCoV, is a new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a virus (more specifically, a [coronavirus](#)) identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China. Early on, many of the patients in the outbreak in Wuhan, China reportedly had some link to a large seafood and animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. However, a growing number of patients reportedly have not had exposure to animal markets. Person-to-person spread has been documented but rarely in the U.S. and other affected countries outside of China. See the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) web page [2019 Novel Coronavirus, Wuhan, China](#)).

What is the source of 2019-nCoV?

- Currently the original source is unknown but animal sources are being investigated. (More information about the source and spread of 2019-nCoV is available on the [2019-nCoV Situation Summary: Source and Spread of the Virus](#)).

How does the virus spread?

- This virus probably originally emerged from an animal source but now can be spread from person-to-person. Some viruses are highly contagious (like measles), while other viruses are less so. (Learn what is known about the [spread of newly emerged coronaviruses](#)).

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

- No. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others circulating among animals, including mammals such as camels (MERS), cats and bats (SARS). The recently emerged 2019-nCoV is not the same as the coronavirus that causes Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) or the coronavirus that causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). However, genetic analyses suggest this virus emerged from a virus related to SARS. There are ongoing investigations to learn more.

Prevention

Is there is a vaccine?

- Not at this time; however, research on options is underway.

How can I help protect myself?

- The best way to prevent infection is to avoid exposure. The U.S. State Department has issued a “Do Not Travel” advisory to China (Jan. 30, 2020). The CDC recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Stay home when you are sick.
 - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
 - These are everyday habits that can help prevent the spread of several viruses.
 - Be current with vaccinations, including the influenza vaccine.

What should I do if I had close contact with someone who has 2019-nCoV but didn’t have any symptoms?

- If you have had close contact with someone who is confirmed to have, or is being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection, you should report this contact and yourself to TCPH for active monitoring immediately. Watch for these signs and symptoms:
 - Fever. Take your temperature twice a day.
 - Coughing.
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
 - Other early symptoms to watch for are chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, and runny nose.
 - **If you develop fever or any of these symptoms, call TCPH (817-321-5350) right away or present to the emergency room.**
 - Under CDC guidance, health departments are now monitoring persons traveling from China. Those who have come from Hubei Province, China are more intensively monitored due to their perceived risk. People traveling from mainland China are perceived to be at medium risk and contacts of confirmed 2019-nCoV cases are perceived to be at high risk, and will be monitored in coordination with TCPH.

Medical Information

What are the symptoms and complications of 2019-nCoV?

- Current symptoms reported for patients with 2019-nCoV have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Read about [2019-nCoV Symptoms](#).

Should I be tested for 2019-nCoV?

- If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days **after travel from China**, or you have close contact with someone who has recently traveled from this area, you should call ahead to a healthcare professional or hospital emergency room and mention your recent travel or close contact. Your healthcare professional or hospital emergency room will work with TCPH and the CDC to determine your need to be tested for 2019-nCoV.

How do you test a person for 2019-nCoV?

- At this time, diagnostic testing for 2019-nCoV can be performed only at the CDC.

What is the difference between nCoV 2019 vs Seasonal coronavirus?

- Seasonal coronavirus can also be transmitted human to human and cause mild disease such as cold-like symptoms. Seasonal coronavirus is detectable on routine lab testing. Novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified and may not be detected on routine lab testing. The effects of the novel 2019-CoV ranges from no symptoms to severe respiratory infection.

Public Health Response and Current Situation

What is being done about 2019-nCoV?

- This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation. TCPH, in collaboration with the Texas Department of State Health Services and CDC will continue to provide updated information as it becomes available. (More information about [CDC's response to 2019-nCoV](#) is available online).

Am I at risk for 2019-nCoV infection in the United States/Texas?

- Since this is a rapidly evolving situation, [risk assessment](#) may change daily. The latest information is that the risk for the U.S. (not abroad) is very low. The latest updates are available on CDC's 2019 Novel Coronavirus website. As of this date, no cases have been reported in Texas.

Has anyone in the United States gotten infected?

- Yes. See the [current U.S. case count of infection with 2019-nCoV](#).

Am I at risk for novel coronavirus from a package or products arriving from China?

- We are still learning about the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and how it spreads. Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets.

Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of 2019-nCoV associated with imported goods and there have not been any cases of 2019-nCoV in the United States associated with imported goods. Information will be provided on the [2019 Novel Coronavirus website](#) as it becomes available.

Travel

Is it safe to travel to China or other countries where 2019-nCoV cases have occurred?

- The current U.S. Department of State travel advisory is at Level 4 (avoid all travel) for China. These notices will be updated as more information becomes available. [Department of State China Travel Advisory](#).

What if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

- If you were in China and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, within 14 days after you left, you should:
 - Seek medical care right away. Before you go to the hospital emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
 - Avoid contact with others.
 - Do not travel while sick.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
 - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to avoid spreading the virus to others. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol, if soap and water are not available.

2019-nCoV and Animals

What about animals or animal products imported from China?

- CDC does not have evidence to suggest that animals or animal products imported from China pose a risk for spreading 2019-nCoV in the United States. Information will be updated as it becomes available.

Should I be concerned about pets or other animals and 2019-nCoV?

- While this virus seems to have emerged from an animal source, it is now spreading from person-to-person. CDC recommends that people traveling to China avoid animals both alive and dead, but *there is no reason to suspect animals or pets in the United States are a source of infection with this new coronavirus.*

Should I avoid contact with pets or other animals if I am sick?

- Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with 2019-nCoV, several types of coronaviruses can cause illness in animals and spread between animals and people. Until we know more, you should avoid contact with animals while ill and wear a facemask if you must be around animals or care for a pet while ill.