

Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Schools (ECE, K-12)

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is offering this resource to provide information about the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and to guide the management of students and staff who have returned to Los Angeles County from recently traveling to areas with known transmission of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) or who have been in close contact with such individuals. This guidance is based on directives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) who are charged with the management of the response to the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) across the United States.

Many students, faculty, and staff in Los Angeles County are concerned about the current outbreak of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). The CDC is working hard to learn as much as possible about 2019-nCoV so that we can better understand how it spreads and better characterize its associated illness. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is also working hard to develop guidance and education materials in the face of evolving information. Please visit the DPH Novel Coronavirus webpage for FAQs and other resources that can be shared with members of your school community: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>

There continues to be a significant increase in the number of people infected with this virus in China and isolated evidence that there can be transmission from an asymptomatic person. To date, LA County only has one confirmed case of novel coronavirus in a non-resident traveler from Wuhan, and there are a relatively small number of additional cases diagnosed across the United States. At this time, novel coronavirus is NOT currently spreading in the community in the United States and the immediate health risk for the general public from 2019-nCoV is considered low.

However, because the risk of exposure to this new coronavirus in China is increasing over time, the US Department of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency to allow local, state, and federal officials to fully coordinate responses in partnership with public health departments, emergency management teams, airports, health care professionals, and first responders.

In the United States currently, the threat to the general public for contracting coronavirus remains low.

General Information

What is novel coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Many of them infect animals, but some coronaviruses from animals can evolve (change) into a new human coronavirus that can spread from person-to-person. This is what happened with the current novel coronavirus known as 2019-nCoV. Diseases from coronaviruses in people typically cause mild to moderate illness, like the common cold. Some, like the SARS or MERS viruses, cause serious infections like pneumonia.

What are common symptoms of 2019-nCoV?

Information to date suggests this virus is causing symptoms consistent with a respiratory illness such as cough, fever, and shortness of breath.

If a person has traveled from mainland China and develops any of these symptoms within 14 days of their return, they should seek medical care right away. They should first call the doctor's office or emergency room and tell them about their symptoms and recent travel.

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How is novel coronavirus spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, human coronaviruses most commonly spread to others from an infected person who has symptoms through:

- Coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

Novel coronavirus is new, and we are learning more each day about how it spreads and how long it takes for people to become sick. As information becomes available, we will keep you informed.

Do not assume that someone of Asian descent is likely to have novel coronavirus.

How is 2019-nCoV treated?

There is no specific treatment for illness caused by the novel coronavirus. However, many of the symptoms can be treated. Treatment is based on the patient's condition.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent novel coronavirus. Be aware of scam products for sale that make false claims to prevent or treat this new infection.

What preventive measures should be taken to help reduce the spread of respiratory viruses, like 2019-nCoV?

Public Health recommends that schools increase education on respiratory hygiene. As with other respiratory illnesses, there are steps that everyone can take daily to reduce the risk of getting sick or infecting others with circulating viruses.

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Help young children do the same.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limit close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands).
- Facemasks are most effective when used appropriately by health care workers and people who are ill.
- Get a flu shot – it's not too late to be protected against influenza.

In addition, it is recommended that schools take these additional preventive measures:

- Staff and students who are ill should remain home; persons who have been ill should be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to school.
- Separate students and staff who get sick at school from others until they can go home.
- Provide adequate supplies for good hygiene, including clean and functional handwashing stations, soap, paper towels, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

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- Encourage routine surface cleaning and disinfection through education, policy, and the provision of supplies.
- Always check reliable sources for up-to-date, accurate information about novel coronavirus; local, state and federal authorities are listed below under *For More Information*.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures

Special processes beyond routine cleaning is not necessary nor recommended to slow the spread of respiratory illness. Schools should follow standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting with an EPA-registered product. Typically, this means daily sanitizing surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as bathrooms, water coolers, desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones and toys.

Do school events need to be canceled?

At this time, there is no need to cancel school or social events. There are no restrictions on public gatherings. Parents, guardians, staff and students should be reminded that part of good health hygiene is staying home from events when they are ill.

What do we need to know about managing travelers, including students, returning from China?

Because of the explosion in the number of new cases in China the past few days, the White House recently issued a set of new directives that became effective on February 3. The orders mandate the following:

- Restrict all foreign nationals who have traveled or been in China the last 14 days from entering the US. (*This order can be renewed by the President every 14 days.*)
- Require all US citizens, legal permanent residents, and their close family members returning from China to enter through one of eleven airports in the US (including LAX), where they will be screened by US Customs and Border Protection agents.
 - If travelers show signs of respiratory illness, they will be transported to a health care facility for further evaluation to determine whether they need further medical assessment and care.
 - All travelers who were in the Hubei Province at any time in the past 14 days are considered high risk and need to be quarantined and monitored at a safe location for 14 days from their last exposure.
 - Returning travelers from other places in China **who have been** in close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus in the last 14 days are considered high risk and will be quarantined and monitored at a safe location for 14 days.
 - All other returning travelers from mainland China outside Hubei Province are considered medium risk and can travel to their final destination. Once they arrive, they are asked to practice social distancing, stay home, and monitor their health for 14 days. Public health departments will follow-up with all travelers designated medium risk.

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Who do these updated directives apply to?

These orders apply only to travelers arriving in the United States after February 2. They do not apply for people who traveled in China and arrived in the United States before this date and these travelers should not be excluded from activities unless they are ill.

Please note that the risk of exposure to this new coronavirus in China is increasing over time. The recommendation to exclude travelers who have recently been in China from school is effective Monday, February 3, 2020. Persons who have arrived from China prior to February 3, 2020 are at lower risk and do not need to be excluded.

How is Public Health implementing the traveler directives and how will schools be informed?

- Returning travelers who do not need quarantine, but are identified as being at medium risk, will be contacted by Public Health and provided guidance for social distancing and self monitoring of their health status for up to 14 days. They will be instructed to contact Public Health should they become ill.
- The quarantine or social distancing of medium risk travelers will be done with public safety and privacy in mind. Public Health will not provide schools with information about specific travelers, but will encourage returning staff members, students, or their family to contact the school administration if they wish.
- School administrators will be informed by Public Health if there is an identified case of novel Coronavirus in their school community that resulted in exposures at the school.

What is the school responsible for?

If a student is a returning traveler and is required to restrict their activities, including attending school, we ask that schools help minimize the impact on the student's academic success, and offer opportunities for the students to study independently at their home or a quarantine location. If an employee is required to restrict their activities, we request that schools extend or adapt policies to provide paid leave for such employees.

In the unusual event that a child or staff member is identified who

- recently traveled from an area of the world experiencing an outbreak of 2019-nCoV **AND**
- has symptoms of respiratory illness, such as fever and cough

that person should be sent home and the school should immediately contact the LA County Department of Public Health, <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/schoolprotocols.htm>.

How will schools be informed if there is a case?

If there is a case confirmed at your campus, a DPH official will call the school principal and superintendent. Public Health staff will work with the designated staff from the school to identify who was in contact with the case and to begin the process to track and monitor contacts. Public Health Communications will work with schools to develop messaging for communication to the school community.

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For more information:

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health, County)
 - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH, State)
 - <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, National)
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>
- World Health Organization (WHO, International)
 - <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

