COVID-19 Prevention and Travel Awareness

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 (formerly known as novel coronavirus 2019 or 2019-nCoV) is a newly identified coronavirus that is causing an outbreak of pneumonia illness. It was first identified in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.

Since then, cases have been identified in multiple other countries including the US.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), human coronaviruses are common throughout the world and usually cause mild to moderate illness in people. This new virus is a public health concern because:

- It is newly identified, so much is still unknown about it.
- Two other human coronaviruses, MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV, have caused severe illness.

What is the risk?

The CDC considers this new virus a public health concern based on current information. However, the immediate health risk to the general US public is considered low at this time. The CDC and the World Health Organization are closely monitoring the situation and providing ongoing guidance.

Whether you are traveling or staying home for spring break it is important that we all do our due diligence in preventing the spread of viruses and diseases. Simply washing your hands with soap and water per the CDC can reduce the risk of respiratory infections by 16%.

With the rapidly evolving global situation associated with COVID-19 individual risk of exposure in the United States is low without travel to China or direct contact with an individual who have returned from Wuhan. However, this is an ongoing investigation that is rapidly changing and as more information and research is done updates will be available.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

- 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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.

  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and [people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).

- 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.

  - 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.

Before you travel check out the link below to see if your destination is on the list.

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list