



January 28, 2020

### **Novel Coronavirus 2019 (2019-nCoV) Information for Universities**

Many university students, faculty and staff within New Jersey are concerned about how the current outbreak of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in Asia will impact their communities and wish to take appropriate steps to mitigate any risks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working hard to learn as much as possible about this new virus so that they can better understand how it spreads and its associated illness. The New Jersey Department of Health is also working hard by developing guidance and education materials should this new virus impact our residents.

The CDC considers this new virus a public health concern based on current information. However, the immediate health risk to the general U.S. public is considered low at this time. The CDC and the World Health Organization are closely monitoring the situation and providing ongoing guidance. The CDC escalated its health warning to a level 3 as the coronavirus continues to spread, recommending that people avoid all nonessential travel to Wuhan, China. <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/novel-coronavirus-china>

As this is an evolving situation, the most up-to-date information can be found from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

#### **What is the difference between seasonal and novel coronavirus?**

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses and there are different types of coronavirus within that family, much like there are different types of influenza viruses. Coronaviruses in general are not new, they are quite common and are a frequent cause of respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. Coronaviruses tend to circulate in the fall and winter months, similar to influenza. Most people get infected with these viruses at some point in their lives.

The type of coronavirus that has recently emerged in Wuhan, China is a **new type** of coronavirus and is infecting people for the first time (which means that people do not have any immunity to it).

#### **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.

#### **How is 2019-nCoV spread?**

At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people. Chinese officials report that sustained person-to-person spread in the community is occurring in China. Person-to-person spread in the United States has not yet been detected, but it's likely to occur to some extent. Cases in healthcare settings, like hospitals, may also occur.

#### **What measures can be taken to prevent 2019-nCoV?**



There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. The best way to prevent infection 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 viruses.

### **How is 2019-nCoV treated?**

Currently, there is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for the coronavirus. There is no vaccine to prevent this virus, and the CDC advises that the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

### **How should schools prepare for the potential of coronavirus in their community?**

- Students who visit health services should be instructed to wear a mask when they present with respiratory symptoms.
- Health personnel should inquire about travel history.
- Clinicians should wear person protective equipment to guard against potential exposure.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/hcp-personnel-checklist.html>
- Continue to monitor up to date information from health officials.
- Always promote daily practice of everyday preventive actions.
- Report any suspect patients to the local health department.
- Have supplies on hand for staff and students (masks, soap, tissues, hand sanitizers, trash baskets).
- Develop a plan for outbreak response and share with stakeholders.
- Establish relationship with local public health officials and identify points of contact.
- Create emergency communication plan and maintain up to date contact information for everyone in your communication chain.
- Establish leadership team, identify essential staff functions, assign tasks and responsibilities.
- Plan workshops and trainings to educate staff on prevention measures.

### **What precautions should be taken for students or faculty who traveled to China?**

The CDC recommends that travelers avoid non-essential travel to Wuhan, China. Chinese officials have closed transport within and out of Wuhan.

If a person travelled to China in the last 14 days and is sick with fever, cough or difficulty breathing they should:

- Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others. Try to stay at least six feet from other people.
- Stay home from school and work.
- 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. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.



Students who have returned from China but are not sick may continue to attend class and work.

**Travelers from China should monitor for the following symptoms for 14 days after their return:**

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

**What should travelers who develop symptoms within 14 days of leaving China do?**

- Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- 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. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

**What preventive measures should be taken to help reduce the spread of respiratory viruses?**

NJDOH recommends that schools increase education on respiratory hygiene. Students, faculty and staff should all be asked to follow these steps that prevent the transmission of respiratory infections:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into your sleeve, not your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash hands often for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Stay home from class and work if you're sick.
- Avoid people who are sick.
- Get a flu shot – it's not too late to be protected.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects.

**Cleaning Procedures**

Special sanitizing processes beyond routine cleaning, including closing schools to clean every surface in the building are not necessary or 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 frequently touched.

Outbreaks involving novel coronaviruses evolve quickly and recommendations from public health officials may change frequently as new information becomes available. Please check the following websites often for updated information.

**For more information:**



- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>
- New Jersey Department of Health website at <https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>  
<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/schoolhealth.shtml>