



## 2019 Novel Coronavirus, Wuhan, China

# Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

### **Q: What is 2019 Novel Coronavirus?**

A: 2019 Novel Coronavirus, or 2019-nCoV, is a new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Learn about 2019 Novel Coronavirus.

### **Q: What is a novel coronavirus?**

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

### **Q: What is the source of 2019 Novel Coronavirus?**

A: Public health officials and partners are working hard to identify the source of the 2019-nCoV. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. Early on, many of the patients in the outbreak in Wuhan, China reportedly had some link to a large seafood and animal market, suggesting the virus likely emerged from an animal source. Analysis of the genetic tree of this virus is ongoing to know the specific source of the virus. SARS, another coronavirus that emerged to infect people, came from civit cats, while MERS, another coronavirus that emerged to infect people, came from camels.

### **Q: What are the symptoms and complications that Novel Coronavirus 2019 can cause?**

A: Current symptoms reported for patients with 2019-nCoV have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever<sup>1</sup>, cough, and difficulty breathing. Read about 2019-nCoV Symptoms.

### **Q: How does the virus spread?**

A: This virus probably originally emerged from an animal source but now seems to be spreading from person-to-person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some viruses are highly contagious (like measles), while other viruses are less so. It's not clear yet how easily 2019-nCoV spreads from person-to-person. When person-to-person spread has occurred with MERS and SARS, it is thought to have happened mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. Spread of MERS and SARS between people has generally occurred between close contacts.

### **Q: Has anyone in the United States gotten infected?**

A: Yes. The first infection with 2019-nCoV in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. See the current U.S. case count of infection with 2019-nCoV.

### **Q: What is CDC doing about 2019-nCoV?**

A: This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation and CDC will continue to provide updated information as it becomes available. CDC works 24/7 to protect people's health. It is CDC's job to be concerned and move quickly whenever there is a potential public health problem. More information about CDC's response to 2019-nCoV is available online.

**Q: Am I at risk for 2019-nCoV infection in the United States?**

A: This is a rapidly evolving situation and the risk assessment may change daily. The latest situation summary updates are available on CDC's web page 2019 Novel Coronavirus, Wuhan, China.

**Q: How can I help protect myself?**

A: Visit the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Prevention and Treatment page to learn about how to protect yourself from respiratory illnesses, like 2019-nCoV.

**Q: What should I do if I had close contact with someone who has 2019-nCoV?**

A: There is information people who have had close contact with a person confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection available online.

**Q: Is it safe to travel to Wuhan, China or other countries where 2019-nCoV 2019 cases have occurred?**

A: The situation is evolving. Stay up to date with CDC's travel health notices related to this outbreak. These notices will be updated as more information becomes available.

**Q: What if I recently traveled to Wuhan, China and got sick?**

A: If you were in Wuhan and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, within 14 days after you left Wuhan, you 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.
- 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 if soap and water are not available.

CDC does have additional specific guidance for travelers available online.

**Q: Is there a vaccine?**

A: Currently, there is no vaccine available to protect against 2019-nCoV.

**Q: What are the treatments?**

A: There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for 2019-nCoV infection. People infected with 2019-nCoV should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms.

Learn about 2019-nCoV Treatment.

**Q: Should I be tested for 2019-nCoV?**

A: If you develop a fever<sup>1</sup> and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after travel from Wuhan, China, you should call ahead to a healthcare provider and mention your recent travel or close contact. If you have had close contact<sup>2</sup> with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from this area, you should call ahead to a healthcare provider and mention your recent travel or close contact. Your healthcare provider will work with your state's public health department and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for 2019-nCoV.

**Q: How do you test a person for 2019-nCoV?**

A: At this time, diagnostic testing for 2019-nCoV can be conducted only at CDC.

State and local health departments who have identified a person under investigation (PUI) should immediately notify CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at 770-488-7100 to report the PUI and determine whether testing for 2019-nCoV at CDC is indicated. The EOC will assist local/state health departments to collect, store, and ship specimens appropriately to CDC, including during afterhours or on weekends/holidays.

For more information on specimen collection see CDC Information for Laboratories.

**Q: What should healthcare providers and health departments do?**

A: For recommendations and guidance on the patients under investigation, infection control, including personal protective equipment guidance; home care and isolation; and case investigation, see Information for Healthcare Professionals. For information on specimen collection and shipment, see Information for Laboratories.

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

A: No. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. 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) in 2003. There are ongoing investigations to learn more. This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available.

**Q: 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 live and dead, but there is no reason to think that any animals or pets in the United States might be a source of infection with this new coronavirus.

**Q: What about animals or animal products imported from China?**

CDC does not have any evidence to suggest that animals or animal products imported from China pose a risk for spreading 2019-nCoV in the United States. This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available. The United States Department of Agriculture regulates [the importation of animals and animal products](#), and CDC regulates the importation of animals and animal products capable of spreading human disease.

**Q: Am I at risk for novel coronavirus from a package or products shipping from China?**

There is still a lot that is unknown about the newly emerged 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and how it spreads. Two other coronaviruses have emerged previously to cause severe illness in people (MERS and SARS). 2019-nCoV is more genetically related to SARS than MERS, but both are betacoronaviruses with their origins in bats. While we don't know for sure that this virus will behave the same way as SARS and MERS, we can use the information from both of these earlier coronaviruses to guide us. In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient

temperatures. 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.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Fever may not be present in some patients, such as those who are very young, elderly, immunosuppressed, or taking certain fever-lowering medications. Clinical judgment should be used to guide testing of patients in such situations.

<sup>2</sup>Close contact is defined as—

- a. being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters), or within the room or care area, of a novel coronavirus case for a prolonged period of time while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment or PPE (e.g., gowns, gloves, NIOSH-certified disposable N95 respirator, eye protection); close contact can include caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a novel coronavirus case. – or –
- b. having direct contact with infectious secretions of a novel coronavirus case (e.g., being coughed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

See CDC's Interim Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients Under Investigation for 2019 Novel Coronavirus

Data to inform the definition of close contact are limited. Considerations when assessing close contact include the duration of exposure (e.g., longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk) and the clinical symptoms of the person with novel coronavirus (e.g., coughing likely increases exposure risk as does exposure to a severely ill patient). Special consideration should be given to those exposed in health care settings.

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