



Information on the Outbreak of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Updated as of February 27, 2020.

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Overview

Recently, a new coronavirus—2019 Novel (New) Coronavirus—was detected in Wuhan, China. This novel coronavirus causes a respiratory (lung) infection. As of February 27, there has been [**one confirmed case**](#)

[\(/news/man-returning-from-wuhan-china-is-first-case-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-confirmed-in\)](/news/man-returning-from-wuhan-china-is-first-case-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-confirmed-in) of this novel coronavirus in Massachusetts.

The risk to residents in Massachusetts remains low.

As of February 27, CDC is updating United States case counts based on repatriated individuals. For the latest on case counts, visit the [**CDC website**](#)

[\(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html).

Symptoms of this infection include:

- fever
- cough and shortness of breath, and
- in severe cases, pneumonia (fluid in the lungs).

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is working closely with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide updated information on this website as it becomes available.

We want you to know that Massachusetts is prepared for this potential outbreak. Massachusetts public health departments and our world-class health care providers are well-versed in emergency preparedness and our healthcare workers, institutions and public health partners across the Commonwealth are constantly training for the possible emergence of diseases.

We are engaging in daily communications with the CDC, US Health and Human Services, and other federal and regional agencies to make sure we are sharing with you and all of our Massachusetts partners the latest guidance and recommendations.

To learn the facts about COVID-19 and help stop the spread of misinformation, visit CDC's webpage: [Share the Facts, Stop Fear](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/share-facts-stop-fear.html)

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/share-facts-stop-fear.html>).

(Note: On February 11, 2020 the World Health Organization named the disease caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus, COVID-19. The virus causing the disease has been named SARS-CoV-2. DPH will be updating this website and other materials to reflect the updated names.)

Information for travelers arriving in the United States

It is important for individuals who have recently traveled and who become ill to notify their health care provider of their travel history. Those who have recently traveled to China and who have symptoms of respiratory illness **or** individuals who have come in contact with someone with symptoms of a respiratory illness should contact their local board of health or health care provider.

Please check CDC for travel updates: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>).

Travelers from China arriving in US

To slow the spread of 2019 novel coronavirus into the United States, CDC is working with public health partners to implement new travel procedures announced in a Presidential Proclamation on Novel Coronavirus. In summary:

1. Foreign nationals who have visited China in the past 14 days may not enter the United States.
2. American citizens, lawful permanent residents, and their families who have been in China in the past 14 days will be allowed to enter the United States, but will be redirected to one of 11 airports to undergo health screening. Logan International Airport is not one of these 11 designated airports. Depending on their health and

travel history, they will have some level of restrictions on their movements for 14 days from the time they left China.

If you are in the second group above and are traveling to the United States:

- Your travel will be redirected to one of 11 U.S. airports where CDC has quarantine stations.
- You will be asked about your health and travel.
- Your health will be screened for fever, cough, or trouble breathing.

Depending on your health and travel history:

- You will have some restrictions on your movement for a period of 14 days from the time you left China.
- You will be contacted by state or local public health authorities upon your return to provide you details on your movement restrictions and monitoring requirements.

What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses; some cause illness in people and some occur in animals, including camels, civet cats and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then may spread between people. Human coronaviruses cause routine seasonal respiratory virus infections. Other coronaviruses, like SARS and MERS, can cause serious illnesses.

How do coronaviruses spread?

Coronaviruses are respiratory viruses and are generally spread through respiratory secretions (droplets from coughs and sneezes) of an infected person to another person. Information about how this novel coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads is still evolving. We know that outbreaks of new virus infections among people are always of public health

concern and are working to make sure you have all the information you need to understand what is happening and how to protect yourself and your family.

What do we know about the source and spread of COVID-19?

Chinese health officials have reported tens of thousands of cases of COVID-19 in China, with the virus reportedly spreading from person to person in parts of that country. COVID-19 illnesses, most of them associated with travel from Wuhan, also are being reported in a growing number of [international locations](#)

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/locations-confirmed-cases.html#map>), including the [United States](#) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>).

Early on, many of the patients in the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, China had some link to a large seafood and live animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. Later, a growing number of patients reportedly did not have exposure to animal markets, indicating person-to-person spread. Chinese officials report that sustained person-to-person spread in the community is occurring in China. Learn what is known about the [spread of newly emerged coronaviruses](#)

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>).

Prevention

Although the risk to Massachusetts residents of the novel coronavirus is low, the risk for influenza is currently high. Many of the things you do to help prevent colds and the flu can help protect you against other respiratory viruses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Download a printable fact sheet – this helpful guide can be posted in workplaces and public spaces: [Prevent Flu and Other Viruses \(/doc/prevent-flu-and-other-viruses/download\)](/doc/prevent-flu-and-other-viruses/download)

There are currently no vaccines available to protect against this novel coronavirus infection.

Should I wear a mask when I go out in public?

The health risk to Massachusetts residents remains low and at this time we are not recommending that people wear masks when they are in public. Masks can be useful in some settings, such as a clinic waiting room, to prevent someone who has a respiratory illness from spreading it to others. There is no hard evidence that wearing a mask protects the wearer outside of the healthcare setting.

Should public events be cancelled?

No, not at this time. The health risk to the general public in Massachusetts remains low. Massachusetts state and local health officials are actively working to help protect the health of our residents and we have no indications that COVID-19 is spreading in our communities at this time.

Treatment

At this time there is no specific treatment for this novel coronavirus. Antiviral medications used to treat other types of viruses are being used but their efficacy is not known at this time.

Guidance and recommendations

For clinicians

Clinicians who see patients with recent travel to China who have a fever, lower respiratory tract symptoms (such as shortness of breath and cough), and/or contact with a known novel coronavirus patient, should contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) 24/7 at (617) 983-6800 for assistance. Further clinical guidance can be found in these CDC advisories:

- **[Guidance for clinicians](#)**

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-guidance-management-patients.html>) caring for patients with 2019-nCoV

- Updated **[infection prevention and control guidance](#)**

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/infection-control.html>) specific to 2019-nCoV

In the event of an outbreak, all hospitals should be prepared for the possible arrival of patients with COVID-19. The **[CDC Hospital Preparedness Checklist](#)** (</doc/cdc-hospital-preparedness-checklist/download>) outlines a number of important practices.

For Long Term Care Facilities

DPH issued a letter to Long Term Care Facilities, including nursing homes and rest homes: **[COVID-19 Guidance: Strategies to Optimize N95 Respirator Supply](#)** (</doc/covid-19-guidance-strategies-to-optimize-n95-respirator-supply/download>).

For schools

DPH issued recommended guidance for school health personnel: **[COVID-19 Guidance for Schools](#)** (</doc/covid-19-guidance-for-schools/download>).

For businesses/employers

CDC issued guidance for employers to help prevent workplace exposures to illnesses and planning considerations if there are more widespread, community outbreaks of COVID-19: **[Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to COVID-19](#)** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>).

For Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Systems and 911 Public Safety Answering Points

CDC issued guidance for all first responders, including law enforcement, fire services, emergency medical services, and emergency management officials, who anticipate close contact with persons with confirmed or possible COVID-19 in the course of their work: [CDC's Interim Guidance for Emergency Medical Services \(EMS\) Systems and 911 Public Safety Answering Points \(PSAPs\) for 2019-nCoV in the United States](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html)

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html>).

Printable fact sheets

COVID-19

Language	PDF	
English	2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) (/doc/english-2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-0/download)	A
Traditional Chinese	2019 年新型冠狀病毒 (2019-nCoV) (/doc/traditional-chinese-2019-nianxinxingguanzhuangbingdu-2019-ncov/download)	A
Simplified Chinese	2019 年新型冠狀病毒 (2019-nCoV) (/doc/simplified-chinese-2019-nianxinxingguanzhuangbingdu-2019-ncov-0/download)	A
Spanish	Nuevo Coronavirus 2019 (2019-nCoV) (/doc/spanish-nuevo-coronavirus-2019-2019-ncov/download)	A
Portuguese	2019 Novo Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) (/doc/portuguese-2019-novo-coronavirus-2019-ncov/download)	A
Haitian Creole	Nouvo Kowonaviris 2019 (2019-nCoV) (/doc/haitian-creole-nouvo-kowonaviris-2019-2019-ncov/download)	A

Prevention

Language PDF

Word Document

English

[Prevent Flu and Other Viruses](#)

[\(/doc/prevent-flu-and-other-viruses/download\)](/doc/prevent-flu-and-other-viruses/download)

[Accessible English](#)

[\(/doc/prevent-flu-and-other-viruses-0\)](/doc/prevent-flu-and-other-viruses-0)

For more information

The most updated information is available from the CDC: [2019 Novel Coronavirus](#)
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>)

Additional Resources

CDC: Coronavirus (<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>)

World Health Organization: Coronavirus (<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>)

Did you find what you were looking for on this webpage?

Yes No

SEND FEEDBACK

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Information for Healthcare Professionals

Current Interim Guidance

- Interim Guidance for Public Health Personnel Evaluating Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) and Asymptomatic Close Contacts of Confirmed Cases at Their Home or Non-Home Residential Settings
- Interim Guidance for Collection and Submission of Postmortem Specimens from Deceased Persons Under Investigation (PUI) for COVID-19, February 2020
- Evaluating and Reporting Persons Under Investigation (PUI)
- Healthcare Infection Control Guidance
- Clinical Care Guidance
- Home Care Guidance
- Guidance for EMS
- [Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure Guidance](#)
- Inpatient Obstetric Healthcare Guidance

Resources for Healthcare Professionals Caring for COVID-19 Patients

- What Healthcare Providers Should Know
- Frequently Asked Questions for Healthcare Providers

Persons Under Investigation (PUI)



- Interim Guidance for Public Health Personnel Evaluating Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) and Asymptomatic Close Contacts of Confirmed Cases at Their Home or Non-Home Residential Settings
- Evaluating and Reporting PUI Guidance
- Reporting a PUI or Laboratory-Confirmed Case for COVID-19

Clinical Care



- Clinical Care Guidance
- Disposition of Hospitalized Patients with COVID-2019
- Inpatient Obstetric Healthcare Guidance

Infection Control



Supply of Personal Protective Equipment





- Infection Control
- Frequently Asked Questions: Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control



- Healthcare Supply of Personal Protective Equipment
- Strategies for Optimizing Supply of N95 Respirators
- FAQ about Respirators

Home Care



- Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization
- Preventing COVID-19 from Spreading in Homes and Communities
- Disposition of Non-Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19

Webinar for Healthcare Professionals

Strategies for Healthcare Systems Preparedness and Optimizing N95 Supplies.





Find more information on supplies of personal protective equipment

View presentation slides  [29 pages]

Other Resources

- COVID-19 Publications
- Healthcare Preparedness Tools
- Health Alert Network (HAN): Update and Interim Guidance on Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019

External Resources

- [World Health Organization \(WHO\) Coronavirus](#) 
- [WHO guidance on clinical management of severe acute respiratory infection when novel coronavirus \(nCoV\) infection is suspected](#) 
- [Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings](#)
- [State health department after-hours contact list](#) 
- [Directory of Local Health Departments](#)  (Contact your local or state health department immediately to report a Person Under Investigation (PUI) for COVID-19.)

Page last reviewed: February 19, 2020

2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

February 6, 2020

A new virus known as 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a respiratory virus first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. This virus has resulted in thousands of confirmed human infections, with 99 percent of them in China. Other countries, including the United States, have identified a still small but growing number of cases in people who have traveled to China.

How does coronavirus spread?

Coronaviruses are respiratory viruses and are generally spread through respiratory secretions (such as droplets from coughs and sneezes) of an infected person to another person. Information about how this novel coronavirus spreads is still limited.

What are the symptoms of 2019 Novel Coronavirus?

This coronavirus causes a respiratory (lung) infection. Symptoms of this infection include:

- fever
- coughing
- shortness of breath
- in severe cases, pneumonia (infection in the lungs).

While most people recover from this infection, some infections can lead to severe disease or death. Older people and those with pre-existing medical problems seem to have a greater risk for severe disease.

What are the treatments? Is there a vaccine?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for 2019 Novel Coronavirus infection, other than supportive care and to relieve symptoms. Currently, there is no vaccine available to protect people from infection with 2019 Novel Coronavirus.

How can I protect myself?

Although risk to Massachusetts residents from 2019 Novel Coronavirus is low, the same precautions to help prevent colds and the flu can help protect against other respiratory viruses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Should I wear a mask when I go out in public?

The health risk to Massachusetts residents remains low and at this time and we are not recommending that people wear masks when they are in public. Masks can be useful in some settings, such as a clinic waiting room, to prevent someone who has a respiratory illness from spreading it to others. There is no hard evidence that wearing a mask protects the wearer outside of the healthcare setting.



How do you test a person for 2019 Novel Coronavirus?

Testing for 2019 Novel Coronavirus is only available through the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Any health care provider who suspects a person is infected with 2019 Novel Coronavirus should call the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to discuss testing, at (617) 983-6800.

Should I be tested for 2019 Novel Coronavirus?

Only those who have been in a place where 2019 Novel Coronavirus is occurring, or have had close contact with someone who has it, and are experiencing flu-like symptoms, should be tested.

What should I do if I have visited a place where 2019 Novel Coronavirus is occurring or if I had close contact with someone who has it?

As of February 3, 2020, if you have been in a place where 2019 Novel Coronavirus is occurring, or you have had close contact with someone who has the virus, you may be asked to partially or completely avoid contact with other people, depending on your likelihood of exposure. You should also:

- Monitor your health for 14 days after your last possible exposure.
- Watch for these signs and symptoms:
 - a. fever
 - b. coughing
 - c. shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Other early symptoms could be chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, and runny nose.
- If you develop **any of these symptoms**, call your healthcare provider.
- Before going to your medical appointment, be sure to tell your healthcare provider about your possible exposure to 2019 Novel Coronavirus.

Where can I learn more about the 2019 Novel Coronavirus?

For updated information, visit the DPH website: www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus.

More detailed information and additional guidance is available from the CDC at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>.

For questions

Contact your doctor, clinic, or local board of health (in the phonebook under Local Government).

Contact the DPH Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences at (617) 983-6800.

