



INFORMATION ON THE 2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS
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EAST-CENTRAL DISTRICT
Health Department

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1. Why are the Americans returning from China being brought to Nebraska?

Disease Basics

1. What is East Central District Health Department (ECDHD) doing to protect its counties and communities from novel coronavirus?

ECDHD is actively involved in helping to protect our communities by:

- Getting regular updates about the latest information about the virus from the CDC.
- Providing guidance to health care providers and facilities on infection control and testing for the virus.
- Working on plans to respond if someone with exposure to the virus becomes ill.
- Being prepared to do disease and contact investigations.
- Communicating with local educational institutions and businesses.

The goal of the public health response is to prevent the spread of the disease and protect all Americans. Basic good health practices: handwashing, covering your cough, staying home when you're sick and avoiding sick people, plus cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated are the best ways you can stay healthy.

2. What is 2019 Novel Coronavirus?

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

3. What is a novel coronavirus?

A novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), is not that same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold. A diagnosis with coronavirus 229E, NL63, OC43, or HKU1 is not the same as a 2019-nCoV diagnosis. These are different viruses and patients with 2019-nCoV will be evaluated and cared for differently than patients with common coronavirus diagnosis.

4. What is the difference between other coronaviruses that cause the common cold and the new, "novel" coronavirus?

- People around the world commonly get infected with human coronaviruses 229E, NL63, OC43, and HKU1. These have been around a long time and many people have immunity to them.
- Sometimes coronaviruses that infect animals can evolve and make people sick and become a new human coronavirus. Three recent examples of this are 2019-nCoV, SARS-CoV, and MERS-CoV. They are new, so most humans have no or little immunity to them.

5. What is the source of 2019-nCoV?

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. 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 civet cats, while MERS, another coronavirus that emerged to infect people, came from camels. More information about the source and spread of 2019-nCoV is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>

6. How does the virus spread?

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. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people.

Much is unknown about how 2019-nCoV, a new coronavirus, spreads. Current knowledge is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with MERS, SARS, and now with 2019-nCoV.

Most often, spread from person-to-person happens among close contacts (about 6 feet). Person-to-person spread is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. It's currently unclear if a person can get 2019-nCoV by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

7. Is 2019-nCoV the same as the MERS-CoV or SARS virus?

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). However, genetic analyses suggest this virus emerged from a virus related to SARS. There are ongoing investigations to learn more. This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available.

8. How can I help protect myself?

Visit the 2019-nCoV Prevention and Treatment page to learn about how to protect yourself from respiratory illnesses, like 2019-nCoV. The best way to protect yourself from any respiratory illness is to wash your hands frequently, cover your cough and contact your healthcare provider if you have any flu like symptoms.

9. What should I do if I had close contact with someone who has 2019-nCoV?

There is information for people who have had close contact with a person confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection available online. Please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>

10. Does CDC recommend the use of face masks in the community to prevent 2019-nCoV?

No. CDC does not currently recommend the use of face masks among the general public. While limited person-to-person spread among close contacts has been detected, this virus is not currently spreading in the community in the United States.

Medical Information

1. What are the symptoms and complications that 2019-nCoV can cause?

Current symptoms reported for patients with 2019-nCoV have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever(1), cough, and difficulty breathing. For confirmed 2019-nCoV infections, reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

CDC believes at this time that symptoms of 2019-nCoV may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 after exposure. This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of MERS viruses. 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.

2. Should I be tested for 2019-nCoV?

If you develop a fever¹ and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after travel from China, you should call ahead to a healthcare professional and mention your recent travel or close contact. If you have had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from this area, you should call ahead to a healthcare professional and mention your close contact and their recent travel. Your healthcare professional will work with your state's public health department and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for 2019-nCoV. Close contact is defined as:

- Being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a 2019-nCoV 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 occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a 2019-nCoV case.

- or -

- Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a 2019-nCoV case (e.g., being coughed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

3. How do you test a person for 2019-nCoV?

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) 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 after-hours or on weekends/holidays. Testing will be available in Nebraska this week or next week, decreasing the time for a result.

For more information on specimen collection see CDC Information for Laboratories, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/index.html>

4. What should healthcare professionals and health departments do?

For recommendations and guidance on patients under investigation; infection control, including personal protective equipment guidance; home care and isolation; and case investigation, see *Information for Healthcare Professionals*, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/index.html>

For information on specimen collection and shipment, see *Information for Laboratories*, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/index.html>

Public Health Response and Current Situation

1. What is CDC doing about 2019-nCoV?

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.

2. Has anyone in the United States gotten infected?

Yes. The first infection with 2019-nCoV in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The first confirmed instance of person-person-spread with this virus in the U.S. was reported on January 30, 2020. Current U.S. case count of infection with 2019-nCoV can be found here: <https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

3. 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 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.

Travel

1. Is it safe to travel to China or other countries where 2019-nCoV cases have occurred?

There is currently a travel warning: CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to the People's Republic of China (this does not include the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau, or the island of Taiwan). <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/china>

Chinese officials have closed transport within and out of Wuhan and other cities in Hubei province, including buses, subways, trains, and the international airport. Other locations may be affected. Older adults and people with underlying health conditions may be at increased risk for severe disease. The situation is evolving. This notice will be updated as more information becomes available.

Check the CDC Traveler Health sight for other locations <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>

2. What if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

If you were in China and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, within 14 days after you left, you should:

- Seek medical advice – Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Call your local health department. For persons in Boone, Colfax, Nance and Platte counties, that is East Central District Health Department.
- 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 thvirus to others.
- Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

CDC does have additional specific guidance for travelers available online. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

2019-nCoV and Animals

1. 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 CDC, the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) play distinct but complementary roles in regulating the importation of live animals and animal products into the United States.

- CDC regulates animals and animal products that pose a threat to human health,
- USDA regulates animals and animal products that pose a threat to agriculture; and
- FWS regulates importation of endangered species and wildlife that can harm the health and welfare of humans, the interests of agriculture, horticulture, or forestry, and the welfare and survival of wildlife resources.

2. 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.

3. Should I avoid contact with pets or other animals if I am sick?

Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with 2019-nCoV, several types of coronaviruses can cause illness in animals and spread between animals and people. Until we know more, avoid contact with animals and wear a face mask if you must be around animals or care for a pet.

Additional Topics

1. How can I explain what novel coronavirus is to my child?

A good answer is a simple, factual statement: *Novel coronavirus disease is a severe infection that can be spread between people. Good care in the hospital and community health can help prevent this disease.*

Returned Americans

About the returning Americans in Ashland:

- Bringing back American citizens and permanent residents is a federal response and the majority of the planning for the transport and housing are contained within the federal government.
- A group of approximately 70 people is being brought back to the United States from China and are planned to be housed at Camp Ashland in Saunders County.
- These individuals have been monitored every step of the way for the novel coronavirus and show no signs of being infected with the disease.
- We believe the risk to the general public is extremely low.
- Established practices for protecting these Americans and the public are being followed. They will complete a 14-day quarantine at the camp. That time began when they left China.
- Plans are in place to safely transport them to the camp from Eppley Airfield.
- Plans are in place to safely transport a person from the camp to Nebraska Medicine if anyone becomes ill.
- Most people who are infected with the coronavirus recover with rest, fluids and some pain medication.
- Coronaviruses are common and most Americans have probably had one during their life.
- This novel coronavirus came to our attention just weeks ago and we are still learning about it. Everything that is learned will help stop the spread.
- The CDC is taking this action to keep the risk of the disease low to Americans.

1. Where are the returned Americans going to stay?

- They will be under mandatory federal quarantine at Camp Ashland in Saunders County. The location is secure and guarded.
- They will not be in the community.

2. Why are they coming to Nebraska?

- If anyone in the group becomes ill, Nebraska agencies have worked together well to show the capability to safely transport them to Nebraska Medicine where they can be safely treated.
- If they become ill, they can quickly be moved safely to the NBU (Nebraska Biocontainment Unit).

3. Is it safe to go to Nebraska Medicine? What is the risk to the public/patients?

Yes, it is safe to go to Nebraska Medicine and to attend all appointments.

- The people coming to Camp Ashland have been screened and are not ill.

- They will be voluntary quarantine in which they will not be able to leave the segregated location and not be near the public.
- They will be closely monitored (twice a day temperature and symptom review) so that if they do become ill, they can be transferred safely to the biocontainment unit.

4. What kind of location is it? Where is it?

- It is an area physically separated from other public areas.
- For their protection, we will not release the exact location.
- There will be 24 hour security.
- They will be monitored twice a day by assessing for symptoms and taking their temperature.
- All their needs will be met.

5. What happens if they get sick?

- If they develop any symptoms or any elevated temperature, they will be immediately evaluated by NBU physician to assess possible move to NBU.

Safety of Community

1. Can people who just came back from China be out in the community?

If you have returned from mainland China affected by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak in the last 14 days, it is recommended that you self-isolate, practice social distancing, and be actively monitored for the onset of symptoms related to 2019-nCoV. DHHS is also asking that travelers who left China within the last two weeks to contact their local health department for guidance and next steps. Informing the local health department of recent travel history to China is the most direct way to ensure timely medical care if needed and to minimize the potential risk to others.

A map of Nebraska's local health departments can be found at http://dhhs.ne.gov/CHPM%20Maps/NE_Health_Dept_Map_Dec_2016.pdf.

11In Boone, Colfax, Nance and Platte counties, contact the East Central District Health Department for guidance and next steps at (402) 562-8969.

2. When and where will the Americans returning from China arrive in Omaha?

Details surrounding the expected time of arrival and number of people coming have yet to be confirmed. We do know that these passengers will arrive at Eppley Airfield in a remote and isolated aircraft parking area and will NOT be inside the Eppley Airfield terminal. The arrival of the flight will have no impact on Omaha passengers, and flight operations at Eppley Airfield will remain normal and unaffected.

3. Is it safe to go to Eppley Airfield?

Yes. The plane will land in a remote part of the airport, away from the terminal and public areas. The returned Americans will not be in a public area.

Policy/Decisions

1. Why are the Americans returning from China being brought to Nebraska?

Our fellow Americans are coming to Nebraska to be quarantined at Camp Ashland. While here, they will be closely observed. If any of the Americans staying at Camp Ashland develop physical signs or symptoms of infection, they would be cared for by one of the best infectious diseases teams in the world, along with partners from the CDC, at an appropriate location at the Nebraska Medical Center.

Nebraska Medicine/UNMC have answered the global health emergency call before. In the last five years, they have been busy teaching other health care professionals around the world, developing new approaches to care, conducting research, and putting what they learned into practice. Along with their federal partners, they have the right people for this job. There is no better place for our fellow Americans to be.