

HealthAlert COVID-19 (Feb 28, 2020 Update)

C OVID-19 is the disease caused by the novel Coronavirus first discovered in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. The novel Coronavirus was recently named “SARS-CoV-2” because it is related to the SARS-CoV virus that was first identified in 2003. Both SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2 can cause severe respiratory disease.

The novel Coronavirus is thought to have originated in bats, similar to MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

The virus is spread person-to-person, between people who are within about 6 feet of each other. This is because the virus is carried by respiratory droplets which are emitted when an infected person sneezes or coughs. If the droplets bearing the virus land in the mucus membranes (mouth, nose, possibly eyes) of others or are inhaled into the lungs, this can cause infection.

If the respiratory droplets land on a surface and a person touches that surface and then their mucus membranes, they may possibly acquire COVID-19 disease; but, this is not the primary mode of transmission.

CDC believes that people are most contagious while they are the sickest; however, there are reports of the virus being spread when symptoms are not present.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The symptoms of the disease are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Confirmed cases have resulted in illnesses that range from mild to severe and even death. At this time, CDC believes that symptoms of COVID-19 appear within two to fourteen days after exposure.

IS THERE A TREATMENT?

There is currently no specific antiviral treatment for the disease and there is no vaccine or antiviral therapy specific for the novel Coronavirus. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to relieve symptoms. Seriously ill people need to be hospitalized.

Anyone who suspects they are sick must contact their healthcare provider and be ready to provide specific information about their contacts and travel history.

PREVENTION

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least twenty seconds.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- 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.
- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.

Prior to going to the healthcare clinic, contact the clinic for information regarding wearing a mask and what to do when you arrive.

WHAT IS MY RISK?

The risk is highest for those who are close contacts of an infected person and healthcare workers who care for infected people. Travel to an area affected by the virus is also a risk factor. The CDC has published [guidelines for evaluation](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/assess-manage-risk.html) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/assess-manage-risk.html) of those who have increased risk.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and it is likely that there will be more cases in the US which will increase the possibility of person-to-person spread. For the most up-to-date on campus response to the COVID-19 outbreak, please go to the USC homepage and click "COVID-19 TRAVEL UPDATE."

RESOURCES

[CDC - Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Situation Summary](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html) https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html

[CDC - About Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html) https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html

[CDC - COVID-19 Prevention & Treatment](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html) https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html

[USC Student Health](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/) https://studenthealth.usc.edu/



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