

# Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

## Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Colleges & Universities

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is offering this resource to provide information about the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and to guide the management of students and staff who have returned to Los Angeles County from either recently traveling to areas with known transmission of the novel coronavirus or with a known exposure to a laboratory confirmed case of 2019-nCoV. This guidance is based on directives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) who are charged with the management of the response to the novel coronavirus across the United States.

Many university and college students, faculty, and staff in Los Angeles County are concerned about the current outbreak of novel coronavirus. The CDC is working hard to learn as much as possible about 2019-nCoV so that we can better understand how it spreads and better characterize its associated illness. Public Health is also working hard to develop guidance and education materials in the face of evolving information. Please visit the DPH Novel Coronavirus webpage for FAQs and other resources that can be shared with members of your school community:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>

There continues to be a significant increase in the number of people infected with novel coronavirus in mainland China and isolated evidence that there can be transmission from an asymptomatic person. To date, LA County only has one confirmed case of novel coronavirus in a non-resident traveler from Wuhan, and there are a relatively small number of additional cases diagnosed across the United States. At this time, novel coronavirus is NOT currently spreading in the community in the United States and the immediate health risk for the general public from 2019-nCoV is considered low.

However, because the risk of exposure to this new coronavirus in mainland China is increasing over time, the US Department of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency to allow local, state, and federal officials to fully coordinate responses in partnership with public health departments, emergency management teams, airports, health care professionals, and first responders.

**In the United States currently, the threat to the general public for contracting coronavirus remains low.**

### General Information

#### **What is novel coronavirus?**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Many of them infect animals, but some coronaviruses from animals can evolve (change) into a new human coronavirus that can spread from person-to-person. This is what happened with the current novel coronavirus known as 2019-nCoV. Diseases from coronaviruses in people typically cause mild to moderate illness, like the common cold. Some, like the SARS or MERS viruses, cause serious infections like pneumonia.

#### **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.

If a person has traveled from mainland China and develops any of these symptoms within 14 days of their return, they should seek medical care right away. They should first call the doctor's office or emergency room and tell them about their symptoms and recent travel.

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### How is novel coronavirus spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, human coronaviruses most commonly spread to others from an infected person who has symptoms through:

- Through droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

Novel coronavirus is new, and we are learning more each day about how it spreads and how long it takes for people to become sick. As information becomes available, we will keep you informed.

Do not assume that someone of Asian descent is likely to have novel coronavirus.

### How is 2019-nCoV treated?

There is no specific treatment for illness caused by the novel coronavirus. However, many of the symptoms can be treated. Treatment is based on the patient's condition.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent novel coronavirus. Be aware of scam products for sale that make false claims to prevent or treat this new infection.

### What preventive measures should be taken to help reduce the spread of respiratory viruses, like 2019-nCoV?

Public Health recommends that colleges and universities increase education on respiratory hygiene. As with other respiratory illnesses, there are steps that everyone can take daily to reduce the risk of getting sick or infecting others with circulating viruses.

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Help young children do the same.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limit close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands).
- Get a flu shot – it's not too late to be protected against influenza.
  
- Be aware that facemasks are most effective when used appropriately by health care workers and people who are ill.

In addition, it is recommended that colleges and universities take these additional measures:

- Remind faculty, staff, and students that when they are ill, they should remain home; persons who have been ill should be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to classes and work.
- Ensure that your leave policies are flexible and non-punitive for both students and staff.

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- Adopt sick leave policies that allow employees to stay home when ill. Develop other flexible leave policies that allow employees to stay home and work remotely when sick or caring for sick household members. Make sure that employees are aware of these policies.
- Continue to encourage welcoming environments for ALL members of our community.
- Always check reliable sources for up-to-date, accurate information about novel coronavirus; local, state and federal authorities are listed below under *For More Information*.

### Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures

Special processes beyond routine cleaning is not necessary nor 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 touched often, such as bathrooms, water coolers, desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, and phones.

### Do campus events need to be canceled?

At this time, there is no need to cancel school or social events. There are no restrictions on public gatherings. Faculty, staff, and students should be reminded that part of good health hygiene is staying home from events when they are ill.

### What do we need to know about managing travelers, including students and staff, returning from mainland China?

Because of the explosion in the number of new cases in mainland China the past few days, the White House recently issued a set of new directives that became effective on February 3. The orders mandate the following:

- Restrict all foreign nationals who have traveled or been in mainland China the last 14 days from entering the US. (*This order can be renewed by the President every 14 days.*)
- Require all US citizens, legal permanent residents, and their close family members returning from mainland China to enter through one of eleven airports in the US (including LAX), where they will be screened by US Customs and Border Protection agents.
  - If travelers show signs of respiratory illness, they will be transported to a health care facility for further evaluation to determine whether they need further medical assessment and care.
  - All travelers who were in the Hubei Province at any time in the past 14 days are considered high risk and need to be quarantined and monitored at a safe location for 14 days from their last exposure.
  - Returning travelers from other places in mainland China who have been in close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus in the last 14 days are considered high risk and will be quarantined and monitored at a safe location for 14 days.
  - All other returning travelers from mainland China outside Hubei Province are considered medium risk and can travel to their final destination. Once they arrive, they are asked to practice social distancing, stay home, and monitor their health for 14 days. Public health departments will follow-up with all travelers designated medium risk.

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### Who do these updated directives apply to?

The risk of exposure to this new coronavirus in mainland China has been increasing over time. For this reason, these orders apply only to travelers arriving in the United States effective Monday, February 3, 2020. Persons who have arrived from mainland China prior to this date are at lower risk of infection with novel coronavirus and do not need to be excluded from activities unless they are ill.

### How is Public Health implementing the traveler directives and how will universities/colleges be informed?

- Returning travelers who do not need quarantine, but are identified as being at medium risk, will be contacted by Public Health and provided guidance for social distancing and self-monitoring of their health status for up to 14 days. They will be instructed to contact Public Health should they become ill.
- The quarantine or social distancing of medium risk travelers will be done with public safety and privacy in mind. Public Health will not provide schools with information about specific travelers but will encourage returning students to contact the administration or student health if they wish. Public Health will also make sure that students receive appropriate services and testing should they become ill. Should students live in dormitories, they will need to work with the school administration to find an alternative living situation where they can safely stay without being in close contact with others.
- The President/Chancellor will be informed by Public Health if there is an identified case of novel Coronavirus in their campus community that resulted in exposures.

### What is social distancing?

Social distancing means remaining out of public places where close contact with others may occur [e.g., dormitories, schools and other classroom settings, cafeterias, shopping centers, movie theaters, stadiums, workplaces (unless the person works in an office space that allows complete distancing from others), and local public conveyances (e.g., bus, subway, taxi, ride share)] for the duration of the potential incubation period unless presence in such locations is approved by Public Health.

### What are the colleges and university responsible for?

Colleges and universities should be prepared to provide suitable housing and basic needs for students who need social distancing and cannot return home. The university will need to identify a location to house the student with minimal contact with others for up to 14 days. The student will need to have no public activities for these 14 days, including not attending classes, parties/gatherings, meetings, etc. The university will also need to identify a way that the student is able to receive meals with minimal exposure to others, as well as accommodate these students' academic needs to minimize the impact on their academic success.

If the student lives close to the campus (driving distance within 1-2 hours) they may be allowed to socially distance at home and follow the guidelines above for restricted activities. Prior to being sent home, Public Health will need to be notified. If the student's home is outside Los Angeles County, Public Health will coordinate with the student's local Public Health Department, as well as with the student and their family to assure that tracking and monitoring of the student continues as needed.

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If faculty or staff are required to restrict their activities, we request that schools extend or adapt policies to provide paid leave for such employees or allow remote working, if feasible.

### How will schools be informed if there is a case on campus?

*If there is a case confirmed at your campus.* The Public Health Director or Health Officer will call the President/Chancellor. Public Health staff will work with the designated staff from the college/university to identify who was in contact with the case and to begin the process to track and monitor contacts. Public Health Communications will also coordinate with universities PIO to develop messaging for mass communications.

### For more information:

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health, County)
  - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH, State)
  - <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, National)
  - <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>
- World Health Organization (WHO, International)
  - <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

