



NOVEL CORONAVIRUS INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR ORANGE COUNTY, CA SCHOOLS, COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES February 1, 2020

As many of you are already aware, there is an outbreak of pneumonia in China, which has been identified to be caused by a novel (new) coronavirus. There are ongoing investigations by many countries to learn more about the outbreak, and the situation is rapidly evolving. On Friday, January 31, 2020, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) declared the novel coronavirus a public health emergency in the United States. The declaration goes into effect at 2 p.m. PST on Sunday, February, 2, 2020.

As part of the emergency declaration, persons returning to the United States through select airports and considered to be at highest risk will be quarantined and monitored by public health officials. Locally, it's important to note that John Wayne Airport is not among this predetermined list of airports. All other returning travelers from China will face a health screening and face up to two weeks of monitored self-quarantine to ensure they pose no health risk. At this time, Orange County, CA continues to have only one confirmed case of novel coronavirus (a man in his 50s who is isolated and in good condition) and there is no evidence of person to person transmission occurring here. The risk to the public in Orange County, CA and throughout the United States remains low.

The OC Health Care Agency (HCA) is working with federal, state, and local partners including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and health care providers to prepare and appropriately care for people who may be at risk for illness associated with novel coronavirus or who have tested positive for novel coronavirus. The HCA expects that local health departments like ours will receive updated, written guidance from the CDC in regard to the self-quarantine, monitoring and testing components of the HHS declaration that may impact our residents with recent travel from China. This is a rapidly changing situation, and we will share more as we are updated from our colleagues at the state and/or federal level.

Below you will find information on the novel coronavirus, what the HCA is doing to ensure the safety of residents and health care workers, and actions that can be taken to prevent spread of respiratory illness. Also included is a FAQ sheet for distribution to members in your community.

What is novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause diseases of varying severities, ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). Coronaviruses usually exist exclusively in animals, but some can transmit from animals to humans, and some of those are also transmitted from person to person, while others are not. In general, transmission of coronaviruses is most likely while a person has symptoms. This is a new virus called a novel coronavirus because it is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. The symptoms of novel

coronavirus include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Health officials across the world are actively collecting information about clinical manifestations of this new virus and who is at risk for infection.

Should schools exclude students who recently traveled from China?

The CDC asks that healthy travelers self-quarantine for 14 days and students who self-quarantine should be excused from school during this period. The quarantine is voluntary and is not monitored or enforced by the HCA, and currently there is no guidance from state or federal officials regarding enforcement by schools, colleges or universities of the self-quarantine guidance. Persons identified at highest risk of developing illness are monitored by federal, state and/or local public health officials. If a high-risk person being monitored is a student, the HCA will exclude them from school for 14 days from their last exposure and will communicate with the school, college or university to assure the student is excluded for the identified period. This is a rapidly evolving situation and as guidance on this subject changes, the HCA will provide updates.

Should staff or students wear masks?

Currently, the CDC does not recommend that the wearing of masks be mandated for staff or students. The wearing of masks is common in many countries, and individuals should exercise their own discretion in their use. As always, the HCA recommends that persons who are ill stay home to limit transmission of all viruses.

For school nurses and student health centers, it is recommended that you:

- Follow standard environmental infection control procedures for healthcare settings.
- When students complain of illness, ask about recent travel to China.
- Post signs that promote standard hygiene practices, such as:
 - Washing hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not on hand.
 - Covering the nose and mouth with elbow or a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
 - Avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Limiting close contact with people who are sick.

If you or someone you know has traveled to China and feel sick, please:

- Stay home and avoid contact with others, except for seeking medical care.
- Seek medical care right away, however before seeking care, call ahead to report recent travel and symptoms.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve (not hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands frequently.

How is novel coronavirus treated?

There is no vaccine for novel coronavirus. People who traveled to or from China or were in close contact with someone who was infected and develop a fever and respiratory symptoms within 14 days of their travel or exposure should seek medical care. There is no current specific treatment although scientists are working on testing medication options. Many of the symptoms can be treated, however, and effective treatment is based on the patient's clinical condition.

What is the HCA doing in response?

The HCA will continue coordinating with state and federal public health partners to ensure that travelers from China or people connected with a confirmed case are appropriately screened, tested and receive care. Travelers from China who are not ill are asked to self-quarantine for 14 days and should seek care if they become ill while visiting Orange County, CA. While there is no cure for this virus, our hospital partners and clinical providers will be able to test and care for ill travelers to minimize transmission and severe illness. The HCA issues health advisories informing local healthcare providers in Orange County, CA of the current recommendations and guidance and sends updates as the situation evolves.

More information is available on our website at www.ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus. Your collaboration to inform the public and prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus is a valuable component of efforts to effectively protect the Orange County, CA community and keep residents and visitors healthy.



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—Frequently Asked Questions—

1. *What is a coronavirus?*

Coronavirus is a type of virus that causes diseases of varying severities, ranging from the common cold to more serious respiratory disease. A novel (new) coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus that hasn't been identified before in humans.

2. *Who gets coronavirus?*

Coronaviruses are normally found in animals but can be spread to humans. Some coronaviruses are also spread from person to person. Recently, thousands of cases of pneumonia associated with a novel coronavirus in China have been identified. Dozens of counties have reported cases and there are cases in the United States, including one in Orange County.

3. *How is coronavirus spread?*

Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- coughing and sneezing
- close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- 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 public health officials are learning more each day about transmission patterns and incubation periods. As information becomes available, we will keep you informed. People who have recently traveled to China could have been exposed to the virus. Seek medical care if you traveled to China and develop a fever or respiratory symptoms within 14 days of your return. People who have been in close contact with a person who has a confirmed case of novel coronavirus should seek medical care if they develop fever or respiratory symptoms.

4. *What are the symptoms of disease?*

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe illness

Complications and outcomes of this virus are still being investigated.

5. *How is novel coronavirus treated?*

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

6. *What is contact tracing?*

Contact tracing is finding people who were in direct contact with a patient with coronavirus. Contacts are watched for signs of illness for 14 days from the last day that they had contact with the ill person. If the contact develops a fever or other symptoms, they are immediately isolated, tested, and provided with care to prevent the virus being spread further.

7. *How can I protect myself when I travel?*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention currently recommends avoiding all nonessential travel to China. Outside of China, novel coronavirus infection is rare. Activities that can prevent the spread of more common respiratory infections, like the flu, can be effective at preventing the spread of novel coronavirus, including:

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water.
- **Avoid touching face** with unwashed hands.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- **Stay home** when you are sick.
- **Cover your cough or sneeze** with a tissue, then throw it in the trash.
- **Clean and disinfect** frequently touched objects and surfaces.

8. *What should I do if I traveled to China and feel sick?*

If you traveled to China and feel sick, you should:

- Stay home and avoid contact with others, except for seeking medical care.
- 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.
- Don't travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue in the trash.

9. *With a case in Orange County, what can I do to protect myself?*

Based on current information, even though there is a case in Orange County and there are likely to be additional cases, the risk of transmission of coronavirus within Orange County remains low. There is no immediate threat to the general public, no special precautions are required, and people should not be excluded from activities based on their race or country of origin. As with other respiratory illnesses, there are steps that everyone can take to reduce the risk of getting sick from circulating viruses. This includes remaining home when ill, washing hands with soap and water frequently, covering coughs and sneezes and, other actions commonly used to prevent influenza.