

# 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](http://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.

