



PRESS RELEASE
2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCov)
Frequently Asked Questions

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2020

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The novel (new) coronavirus (2019-nCov) has been declared a global health emergency and a national health emergency in the United States. This is a serious and rapidly developing situation, affecting thousands of people worldwide.

The virus originated in Wuhan, China and has spread to several countries including the United States. A person's risk for the illness is based on their travel history, or the travel history of someone they have had close contact with.

San Benito County Public Health officials are closely working with California Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Bay Area health officials to monitor the 2019-nCov. Based on two confirmed cases in our county, Public Health officials encourage residents to stay informed about 2019-nCov.

Below are a few important questions you may have about 2019-nCov.

What is the 2019-nCov?

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that are common among animals and humans. In rare cases, animal coronaviruses can be transmitted from animals to humans. This 2019-nCov is a newly discovered coronavirus that has not been previously detected in humans. It is not related to the influenza virus.

What are the symptoms of 2019-nCov?

Typically, human coronaviruses cause mild-to-moderate respiratory illness. Symptoms are very similar to the flu, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, and sore throat.

How is 2019-nCov diagnosed?

Healthcare providers will assess patients, and if 2019-nCov infection is possible, further testing will be conducted. At this time, the only laboratory testing for 2019-nCov is being done at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) laboratory. Testing at local Public Health Laboratories will be available soon. If a patient is suspected of being infected with the novel coronavirus, public health agencies will work with health care providers to ensure necessary testing is completed.

What is the treatment for 2019-nCov?

Most people with illnesses due to common 2019-nCov infections recover on their own. There are no specific treatments or vaccines at this time for 2019-nCov infections. For patients who are severely ill, hospitals can provide supportive care. As more is discovered about this novel coronavirus, treatment may change over time.

How does the flu compare to 2019-nCov?

Although little is known about 2019-nCov, risk is low to those in the United States. However, the CDC estimates that so far during the 2019-2020 flu season, there have been at least 15 million flu illnesses, 140,000 hospitalizations and 8,200 deaths in the United States. According the World Health Organization (WHO), the flu causes up to 5 million cases of severe illness around the globe and is responsible for killing 650,000 people each year.

Individuals should take precautions to stop the spread of flu germs and take antiviral medication if prescribed. Close contact with people who are sick should be avoided and good hand hygiene should be practiced. “The best way for all San Benito County residents to stay healthy and prevent the spread of disease is to practice consistent hand washing, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, stay home if you are sick, and get a flu shot. Masks do not prevent illness, but can be helpful for sick people to wear, so that they do not spread germs to others,” Stated Dr. Marty Fensterseib, San Benito County Health Officer.

Travel should be avoided anywhere in Mainland China at this time. Persons who are currently arriving back from China are being screened and quarantined when necessary. Again, the risk for 2019-nCov is very low for our community, however, influenza is already widespread across California. Flu shots are still recommended for those who have not been vaccinated.

Where can I find more information?

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html><https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx><https://www.smchealth.org/coronavirus>. You can also visit San Benito County Public Health Services website for updated local information at <http://hhsa.cosb.us/publichealth/>. The CDC provides more information about novel coronavirus at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

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