

2019-nCoV: Guidance for Organizations

What is 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?

2019 Novel Coronavirus, or 2019-nCoV, is a new respiratory virus identified in December 2019 as the cause of an outbreak in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. People who get sick with 2019-nCoV develop mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms including fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Illness can begin 2 to 14 days after an exposure. Although this virus likely emerged from an animal source, it can also spread from person-to-person.

What is the health risk from 2019-nCoV in Chicago?

Currently, the health risk to the general public from 2019-nCoV remains low, both in the U.S. and in Chicago. Measures are being developed to prevent the spread of illness. At this point, there is no need for the general public in Chicago to change their behavior in any way related to this virus. The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) takes new viruses very seriously, is monitoring the situation carefully, and will rapidly communicate any changes in this guidance.

Do organizations in Chicago need to take any special precautions?

There is **NO need** for business, community, faith-based or other organizations in Chicago to take any special precautions, including organizations that may have members or employees who have travelled to China. A person who has traveled overseas to China and is well is NOT restricted from work, school or any public activities.

What if an employee/member of my organization is sick with fever and respiratory symptoms?

At this time, Chicago residents, workers and students are at low risk of becoming infected with 2019-nCoV, unless they have recently traveled to China or have come in close contact with someone who was ill. Even if an ill employee/member of your organization has traveled to China, or has had contact with an ill person who has traveled there, respiratory illness may be due to a variety of other causes, including influenza and other common viruses. In this case they **should be seen by a doctor** or medical professional. Novel coronavirus can only be diagnosed through a laboratory test.

What if we think an employee/member of our organization may be sick with 2019-nCoV?

If an employee/member of your organization who has traveled in the last 14 days to China develops respiratory symptoms including fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, **report immediately** to CDPH by calling **312-746-SICK (7425)** Monday through Friday during business hours or **311** during evenings. Call ahead before taking them to a doctor's office or emergency department to prevent any potential spread.

What If we have an employee who has been ill at work and is now a person under investigation (PUI)?

CDPH will follow up with businesses and organizations who need more specific guidance.

Should we be concerned about pets or other animals and 2019-nCoV?

CDC recommends that people traveling to China avoid animals both live and dead, but there is no reason to think that any animals or pets in the United States might be a source of infection with this new coronavirus.

One of our employees/members of our organization is from China. Can they return home?

CDPH recommends **avoiding travel to China**. The latest travel updates are available on CDC's web page [Traveler's Health](#).

How can businesses and organizations prevent infections with 2019-nCoV and other respiratory diseases?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. As with any respiratory virus, you can protect yourself and others by taking everyday common sense actions:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth 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 the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

CDPH **does NOT** recommend:

- the use of masks or gloves
- any change in daily travel routines
- social distancing
- cancelling or avoiding mass gatherings
- missing work, classes or other public events

General infection control guidance is available at [www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol](#).

What should medical personnel do to prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV?

Medical personnel should refer to the outpatient office guidance on [www.chicagohan.org/2019-nCoV](#). If an employee/member of your organization calls ahead with travel to China within the last 14 days and concerning symptoms, collect detailed history over the phone prior to deciding the location for triage. You may call **312-746-SICK (7425)** or **311** for consultation.

For more information, please visit [www.chicago.gov/2019-nCoV](#) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](#), email coronavirus@chicago.gov, or call 312-746-4835.