Current Situation (Updated 2.28.2020)

The U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and which has now been detected in 37 locations internationally, including cases in the United States. The virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes has been named “coronavirus disease 2019” (abbreviated “COVID-19”).

What Is A Coronavirus?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Coronaviruses are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface. Human coronaviruses were first identified in the mid-1960s. Symptoms of coronaviruses are frequently like those of a cold or flu.

How is The Virus Transmitted?

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

- The air by coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching, kissing or shaking hands
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

Risk Assessment

Outbreaks of novel virus infections among people are always of public health concern. The risk from these outbreaks depends on characteristics of the virus, including how well it spreads between people, the severity of resulting illness, and the medical or other measures available to control the impact of the virus.

For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low. But individual risk is dependent on exposure and existing health conditions. You can learn more about the coronavirus at the CDC website: [CDC Coronavirus].

Symptoms

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 infection have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- Runny Nose
- Sore Throat
- Possible Headache
- Possible Fever
- Shortness of Breath

CDC currently believes that symptoms of 2019-nCoV may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Note, we are also currently in cold and flu season and they have similar symptoms. It is a timely reminder to annually get your flu shot! Reports from overseas reflect that most people infected with the coronavirus (over 80%) have mild symptoms.
**How to Protect Yourself**

You may be able to reduce your risk of infection by doing the following:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick

For more information related to proper hand washing practices, please refer to this link from the CDC.

If you are considering international travel, please check the CDC website for current travel information and recommendations: [CDC Travelers](https://www.cdc.gov/travel)