

Novel Coronavirus: Guidance for Employers



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Shelby County Health Department

What is novel coronavirus?

Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a virus strain that has only spread in people since December 2019. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

How does novel coronavirus spread?

Health experts are still learning the details about how this new coronavirus spreads. Other coronaviruses spread from an infected person to others through:

- the air by 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
- in rare cases, contact with feces

How severe is novel coronavirus?

Experts are still learning about the range of illness from novel coronavirus. Reported cases have ranged from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires hospitalization. So far, deaths have been reported mainly in older adults who had other health conditions.

What are the symptoms?

People who have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus:

Fever



Cough



Difficulty
breathing



Who is at risk for novel coronavirus?

Currently the risk to the general public is low. At this time, there are a small number of individual cases in the U.S. To minimize the risk of spread, health officials are working with healthcare providers to promptly identify and evaluate any suspected cases.

Travelers to and from certain areas of the world may be at increased risk. See wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel for the latest travel guidance from the CDC.

How can I protect my workforce from infection ?

If employees travel overseas (to China, but also to other places) follow the CDC's travel guidance: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel. Consider restricting business travel to affected areas for the time being.

Right now, the novel coronavirus has not been spreading widely in the United States, so there are no additional precautions recommended for the general public. Steps you can encourage your employees to take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent coronavirus:

- encourage hand washing often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- encourage employees to avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- encourage employees to stay home when sick
- Instruct employees to cover mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing
- surgical masks are not needed at this time, except in health care settings



Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent coronavirus infections.

How is novel coronavirus treated?

There are no medications specifically approved for coronavirus. Most people with mild coronavirus illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. However, some cases develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.

For more information, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

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