

## CORONAVIRUS

### What is it?

Coronaviruses are common among animals such as camels, cattle, cats, and bats. While it is rare for a coronavirus to infect people, this particular strain, first seen in Wuhan, China, causes respiratory distress. It has been linked to large seafood and animal markets in the region which suggests an animal-to-person transmission. However, because many of those infected report no animal contact, the virus is also thought to be spread person-to-person when an infected person sneezes or coughs. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers this a very serious public health threat but considers the current risk for the general American public to be low. To keep the coronavirus threat in perspective, the CDC reminds us that influenza is currently prevalent at elevated levels in the U.S. and has caused 26 million illnesses and 14,000 deaths this flu season.

### Symptoms

The virus may appear in 2-14 days once contracted and can range from mild to severe. The main symptoms are similar to influenza and include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

If you have any of these symptoms, it's best to contact your primary care physician before going to the emergency room. If you feel your symptoms are so severe that you are unable to wait to see your doctor, then seek immediate medical attention.

### How to Protect Your Employees

One of the best ways you can protect your employees is to have a plan in place that provides both immediate and long-term solutions for protection from exposure to infectious disease. An emphasis on proper hygiene, social distancing, work practices, and administrative controls can help control employees' exposure. Social distancing means reducing the frequency, duration, and proximity of contact between employees and customers. For example, you might reduce the number and/or the length of in-person meetings. Work practices include having personal protective equipment available and administrative controls include scheduling work tasks in a way that will help reduce exposure levels. See below for ways to help protect your employees:

#### Work Practice Controls

- Have protective equipment available such as gloves and surgical masks
- Provide no-touch trash cans
- Make hand soap and hand sanitizer readily available
- Use disposable soap
- Educate employees on how to reduce their risk

#### Administrative Controls

- Develop and communicate policies encouraging ill employees to stay at home when sick
- Limit or discontinue traveling while sick
- Telecommute, email, or implement flexible work hours to reduce exposure to others

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- Develop emergency communications
- Develop a plan for continued operations should you experience an increase in absenteeism
- Communicate available resources for employees who have compromised immune systems (i.e. pregnant women, employees with auto-immune conditions, etc.)

## General Prevention

Currently, there is no vaccine for the virus. The best way to prevent the infection is to utilize the everyday preventive techniques below to prevent from spreading the disease.

Many aspects of this issue are not under our personal control. One way to manage anxiety about the illness is to focus upon the preventative actions that are under our control. Reassure your employees that the best way to prevent the infection is to utilize these proven, everyday preventive techniques below to prevent the spreading of the disease.

- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and wash often
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid contact with others who are sick
- Stay at home if you are sick
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze with a tissue and dispose of the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces frequently
- Do not travel when you are sick
- Wear a facemask
- Monitor your symptoms

## Additional Resources

If you would like more information about this virus and updates, review the following list of resources available from the CDC.

- [CDC Travelers' Health: Novel Coronavirus in China](#)
- [CDC Health Alert Network Advisory Update and Interim Guidance on Outbreak of 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(2019-nCoV\) in Wuhan, China](#)
- [CDC Health Alert Network Advisory information for state and local health departments and health care providers](#)
- [CDC Information on Coronaviruses](#)

## Sources:

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2020). Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Summary. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>
- United States Department of Labor. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (2020). Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for a potential pandemic. Retrieved from: [https://www.osha.gov/Publications/influenza\\_pandemic.html#organizations\\_protect](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/influenza_pandemic.html#organizations_protect)

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