

Novel Coronavirus FAQs

Last Updated 3/14/2020



Is there a confirmed COVID-19 case in Kansas?

Kansas confirmed its first case of COVID-19 on March 7. The current number of Kansas cases is being posted in a Public Update Monday – Friday on our website, www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus.

What is 2019 novel coronavirus?

The 2019 novel coronavirus (now called COVID-19) is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people and can spread from person-to-person. This virus was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China around the end of 2019.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

COVID-19 cases have now been detected in 90 locations around the world, including cases in the United States. Imported cases of COVID-19 in travelers have been detected in the U.S. Person-to-person spread of COVID-19 has also been reported among close contacts of returned travelers from Wuhan. There is also evidence of community spread in some states including Washington State. However, there is no evidence of community spread in Johnson County or in Kansas.

To minimize the risk of spread, health officials are working with healthcare providers to promptly identify and evaluate any suspected cases and their close contacts. Travelers to and from certain areas of the world may be at increased risk. See <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel> for the latest travel guidance from the CDC.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first infection with COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of infection with COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>

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 after they start to show symptoms 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

What are the symptoms of 2019-nCoV?

Patients with COVID-19 have reported mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of: fever, cough and shortness of breath.

What are severe complications from this virus?

In severe cases, infection can cause bronchitis, pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. From what we know so far, illness seems to be more severe in older individuals and in people with other health conditions.

How soon after exposure do symptoms start?

It depends on the type of coronavirus. In general, symptoms usually appear 2–14 days after exposure.

CDC is gathering information on whether this novel coronavirus can be spread by people before they show symptoms. Contact investigations ongoing in the U.S. and other countries will help answer this question.

At this time, CDC's guidance is based on the available science around coronaviruses, which suggests that the incubation period ranges from 2 to 14 days and that patients are most contagious when they have a fever/symptoms.

How are coronavirus infections diagnosed?

Special laboratory tests for respiratory or blood specimens are needed to diagnose this novel coronavirus infection. This testing is provided through the Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratories for Kansas residents. There is no cost to analyze the test; however, healthcare providers may assess a collection fee.

How long do test results typically take?

Once samples are received at the Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratories, results should be ready in about a day. If the test result is negative, no further testing is needed. However, if the test result is positive, samples would need to be sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for confirmation testing. It may take several days to receive confirmation results.

How can I help protect myself and my family?

This virus is not widely spreading in the United States right now, but the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- 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.
- To keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should:
 - 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.
- Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent novel coronavirus infections.

Is it safe to open packages that have arrived from China?

Yes. Coronaviruses in general only live for a few hours on surfaces. Packages coming from China have likely spent a very long time getting to the US so it is unlikely that any viruses have survived. Coronaviruses can be killed by regular disinfection.

What should I do if I recently traveled to one of the countries on the CDC travel advisory list and got sick?

If you were in any of the countries on the CDC Alert Level 2 or Warning Level 3 list (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>) within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should get medical care. Call the office of your healthcare provider before you go and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. Wear a surgical face mask to avoid spreading droplets when you cough or sneeze.

What should I do if I have had contact with someone who recently travelled to one of the countries on the CDC travel advisory list?

If you have been in close contact with someone who recently travelled to a country on the CDC Alert Level 2 or Warning Level 3 list (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>) and they do

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not have any of the symptoms of novel coronavirus infection, including a fever and respiratory symptoms, it is very unlikely that you have been exposed to the novel coronavirus. From what we currently know about the virus, a person can spread the disease once they start to show symptoms.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

Is there a treatment?

There are no medications specifically approved for this novel 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 people have developed pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.

What is a close contact?

A close contact is a person who has been within about 6 feet of a person with confirmed novel coronavirus infection for a prolonged period of time (more than 10 minutes) or has had direct contact with body fluids from a person with confirmed novel coronavirus infection.

What is a person under investigation (PUI)?

A person under investigation (PUI) is an ill person with possible novel coronavirus infection. We consider a PUI to be someone who meets one of these criteria. If a person is considered a PUI, KDHE will coordinate with the local health department and/or health care provider to collect samples for testing.

Epidemiologic Risk	&	Clinical Features
History of travel from Hubei Province, China within 14 days of symptom onset	AND	Fever* and lower respiratory illness (cough or shortness of breath)
History of travel from any country with a CDC Alert Level 2 or Warning Level 3 travel advisory+ within 14 days of symptom onset	AND	Fever* and lower respiratory illness (cough or shortness of breath)

Novel Coronavirus FAQs

Last Updated 3/14/2020

Close contact^ with a person that has laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 and developed symptoms within 14 days of contact	AND	Fever* or lower respiratory symptoms (cough or shortness of breath)
No source of exposure has been identified	AND	Fever with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) and without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza)

What is a confirmed case?

A confirmed case is defined as a person who has tested positive for 2019 novel coronavirus. Currently, testing can be done at the Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratories for Kansas residents. If the result is positive at the Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratories, then confirmation testing will need to be done at CDC.

What steps does public health take to investigate people who may have an infection?

- 1) If a person is identified as a Person Under Investigation (PUI), the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the local health department will isolate the person out of caution until testing is complete.
- 2) Samples will be collected from the PUI and sent to the Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratories for testing. Special laboratory tests for respiratory or blood samples are needed to diagnose novel coronavirus infection.
- 3) The PUI will be kept in isolation out of an abundance of caution to protect public health until test results are received. KDHE and the local health department will work with other local authorities on where the PUI will be housed.
- 4) While public health is waiting for test results, we will interview the PUI to create a detailed timeline of where he/she went while potentially infectious. This is called creating the potential contact list.
 - a. If the test result comes back positive, people on the potential contact list will be contacted by public health and informed of the situation. Contacts will be asked to self-monitor for signs and symptoms, including fever and respiratory symptoms, for 14 days after the last time they were in close contact with the positive case.

- b. If the test result comes back negative, nothing further is done with the potential contact list and the PUI can return to normal activity.

How long would a case potentially need to be kept in isolation?

At this time, we do not know enough about the virus to know how long an infected person is contagious. Testing will be repeated often to see if the virus is still detected in samples collected from the patient.

How will people be informed if they have been in contact with a case?

If you have been identified as a contact of a positive case, KDHE will attempt to contact you via an automated text message system on a daily basis for 14 days after your last exposure.

- In that text message, you will be prompted to press a certain button if you are experiencing a fever and respiratory symptoms within 14 days of your last exposure to the case. If you respond yes, you will be called by a KDHE epidemiologist for further evaluation.
- If you respond no, indicating that you do not currently have any symptoms, then the message will end.
- If you fail to respond to the text message, or if the contact information we have for you is incorrect, then KDHE and your local health department will utilize other means to connect with you.

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

While this virus seems to have started from an animal source, it is now spreading from person-to-person. 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.

To date, CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19. At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals including pets can be infected with or spread COVID-19. However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it's always a good idea to wash your hands after being around animals.

What about animals or animal products imported from China?

CDC does not have any evidence to suggest that animals or animal products imported from China pose a risk for spreading COVID-19 in the United States. This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available. [The United States Department of Agriculture regulates](#) the importation of animals and animal products, and [CDC regulates](#) the importation of animals and animal products capable of spreading human disease.

Where can I go for more information?

More information on the national situation can be found at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>

More information on the Kansas situation can be found at:
<http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus/index.htm>