

For Immediate Release

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2019 Novel Coronavirus Information

TOPEKA – While the state of Kansas as of today does not have any reported cases of the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), the Kansas Department of Health and Environment wants to provide information and facts regarding this new virus.

“The risk to the general public is low,” Dr. Lee Norman, KDHE Secretary, said. “This new strain of coronavirus was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. If you have been to Wuhan, China, in recent weeks or have been around someone who has, and are displaying influenza-like symptoms, please call your healthcare provider.”

Chinese authorities identified the new coronavirus in December 2019, which has since resulted in hundreds of confirmed cases in China, including cases outside Wuhan City, with additional cases being identified in a growing number of other countries. The first case in the U.S. was announced January 21 in Washington State and a second case was reported January 24 in Illinois. This is an ongoing investigation and information is changing rapidly. For updated information on the outbreak, visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

To help you protect yourself, KDHE encourages you to:

1. Recognize the symptoms of illness and understand how it is transmitted.
2. Seek care if you have recently traveled within the affected region and are experiencing these symptoms (below).
3. Always practice good hygiene, wash hands, cover coughs and sneezes and avoid sharing food, cups or utensils.
4. Follow CDC Travel Guidance if you have or are planning to travel to China.

Symptoms

Symptoms can include a fever and respiratory symptoms such as cough or difficulty breathing, similar to what you may feel with influenza or a bad cold. Symptoms usually start within 14 days of an exposure. Transmission of this illness is believed to be person-to-person or animal-to-person. It cannot be transmitted from inanimate objects (such as items or packages purchased from China).

Seek Care

Anyone who has traveled from Wuhan City, China or has been in contact with someone who is ill from Wuhan City, China, within the last 14 days and is experiencing a respiratory illness should immediately call their healthcare provider.

Those who have not recently visited China but are experiencing influenza-like illness, with fever greater than 100.3, and symptoms, including cough, body aches, severe sore throat or runny nose, should consider seeking medical attention for the possibility of the flu, especially if symptoms worsen. Please contact your healthcare provider.

Flu Shots

While the flu shot cannot protect from this novel coronavirus, we are recommending that everyone (six months of age or older) and especially those who travel receive a flu vaccination. With the current seasonal influenza activity, there may be confusion as persons with influenza will exhibit similar signs and symptoms such as fever and cough.

Information for International Travelers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued [guidance](#) for those planning to travel to China. It is important that all travelers adhere to these precautions in order to protect the health and safety of our communities. For additional information about coronavirus, including signs and symptoms, transmission and risk of exposure, and what to do if you are exhibiting symptoms, please refer to the [CDC website](#).

“It’s important to note that four types of human coronavirus are common in the U.S.,” Dr. Norman said. “These types of coronaviruses can be detected on respiratory virus panels that are commonly performed at many hospitals and clinical laboratories. Sometimes coronaviruses that infect animals can evolve and make people sick and become a new human coronavirus. An example of this is this newly identified 2019-nCoV. This coronavirus, 2019-nCoV, is not detected on the respiratory virus panels commonly used in the United States and can only be tested for at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at this time.”

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