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"Commitment to Leading The Community for a Healthier and Safer Tomorrow"

LCDOH TALKING POINTS
Regarding Coronavirus COVID-19
March 3, 2020

A new virus called the coronavirus started in China in December 2019. On February 11, 2020, the World Health Organization named the disease coronavirus disease 2019 (abbreviated "COVID-19"). The number of cases in the US and worldwide continue to increase. The Johns Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering is regularly updating an online dashboard for tracking the worldwide spread of the coronavirus outbreak. Please visit: <https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/01/23/coronavirus-outbreak-mapping-tool-649-em1-art1-dtd-health>. The World Health Organization has declared the new coronavirus outbreak a worldwide public health emergency.

The Livingston County Department of Health is working closely with the New York State Department of Health, CDC and other community partners to ensure the health and safety of our residents. As of March 3 2020, there have been **no** confirmed cases of coronavirus in Livingston County. There is one case in NY and 109 cases in the United States. While the risk to the general public is still low, it is important to stay informed and take proper precautions to protect ourselves and our families. (Please see page 4.) We continue to provide information to health care providers, community partners and residents.

Information regarding this virus is changing rapidly. New Yorkers can call 1-888-364-3065 with questions or concerns about travel and symptoms. Information on this virus in English and other languages can be found on the following websites: www.cdc.gov or www.nysdoh.org.

Frequency Asked Questions – Source: CDC

Q: What is 2019 Novel Coronavirus?

A: The 2019 Novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19, is a new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. [Learn about 2019 Novel Coronavirus.](#)

Q: What is a novel coronavirus?

A: A novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified.

Q: Why is the disease causing the outbreak now being called coronavirus disease 2019, COVID-19?

A: On February 11, 2020 the World Health Organization [announced](#) an official name for the disease that is causing the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak, first identified in Wuhan China. The new name of this disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, ‘CO’ stands for ‘corona,’ ‘VI’ for ‘virus,’ and ‘D’ for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as “2019 novel coronavirus” or “2019-nCoV.”

There are [many types](#) of human coronaviruses including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. The name of this disease was selected following the World Health Organization (WHO) for naming of new human infectious diseases.

Q: What is the source of COVID-19?

A: Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people, and others, such as canine and feline coronaviruses, only infect animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses that infect animals have emerged to infect people and can spread between people. This is suspected to have occurred for the virus that causes COVID-19. Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) are two other examples of coronaviruses that originated from animals and then spread to people. More information about the source and spread of COVID-19 is available on the [Situation Summary: Source and Spread of the Virus](#) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html#anchor_1580079137454).

Q: How does the virus spread?

A. Current understanding about how the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spreads is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses.

Person-to-person spread

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet)
- Via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Learn what is known about the [spread of COVID-19](#). Learn what is known about the [spread of newly emerged coronaviruses](#) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>).

Q: Can someone who has had COVID-19 spread the illness to others?

A: The virus that causes COVID-19 is [spreading from person-to-person](#). Someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 can spread the illness to others. That is why CDC recommends that these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home (depending on how sick they are) until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

How long someone is actively sick can vary so the decision on when to release someone from isolation is made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with doctors, infection prevention and control experts, and public health officials and involves considering specifics of each situation including disease severity, illness signs and symptoms, and results of laboratory testing for that patient.

Current [CDC guidance for when it is OK to release someone from isolation](#) is made on a case by case basis and includes meeting all of the following requirements:

- The patient is free from fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- The patient is no longer showing symptoms, including cough.
- The patient has tested negative on at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected at least 24 hours apart.

Someone what has been released from isolation is not considered to pose a risk of infection to others.

Q: Can someone who has been quarantined for COVID-19 spread the illness to others?

A: Quarantine means the separating a person or group of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease but have not developed illness (symptoms) from others who have not been exposed in order to prevent the possible spread of that disease. Quarantine is usually established for the incubation period of the communicable disease, which is the span of time during which people have developed illness after exposure. For COVID-19, the period of quarantine is 14 days from the last date of exposure because 14 days is the longest incubation period seen for similar coronaviruses. Someone who has been released from COVID-19 quarantine is not considered a risk for spreading the virus to others because they have not developed illness during the incubation period.

Q: How can I help protect myself?

A: There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- 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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC’s recommendations for using facemask.
 - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear facemask to protect themselves from respiratory viruses, including COVID-19.
 - Facemask should be used by people who show symptoms of 2019 novel coronavirus, in order to protect others from the risk of getting infected. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and [people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html>) (at home or in a health care facility).

Q: What should I do if I had close contact with someone who has COVID-19?

A: There is information for [people who have had close contact \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fguidance-prevent-spread.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fguidance-prevent-spread.html) with a person confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection available online.

Q: What are the symptoms and complications that COVID-19 can cause?

A: For confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases, reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

CDC believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 after exposure. This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of [MERS](#) viruses.

Q: Should I be tested for 2019-nCoV?

A: If you develop a fever¹ and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after travel from China, you should call ahead to a healthcare professional and mention your recent travel or close contact. If you have had close contact² with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from this area, you should call ahead to a healthcare professional and mention your close contact and their recent travel. Your healthcare professional will work with your state's public health department and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

Q: How do you test a person for COVID-19?

A: At this time, diagnostic testing for COVID-19 can be conducted only at CDC.

State and local health departments who have identified a [person under investigation \(PUI\)](#) should immediately notify CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to report the PUI and determine whether testing for COVID-19 at CDC is indicated. The EOC will assist local/state health departments to collect, store, and ship specimens appropriately to CDC, including during afterhours or on weekends/holidays.

Q: What is CDC doing about COVID-19?

A: This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation and CDC will continue to provide updated information as it becomes available. CDC works 24/7 to protect people's health. ~~It is CDC's job to be concerned and move quickly whenever there is a potential public health problem.~~ More information about [CDC's response to 2019-nCoV \(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html#cdc-response> \)](#) is available online.

Q: Am I at risk for COVID-19 infection in the United States?

A: This is a rapidly evolving situation and the [risk assessment \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html#risk-assessment\)](#) may change daily. The latest updates are available on CDC's 2019 Novel Coronavirus website.

Q: Has anyone in the United States gotten infected?

A: Yes. The first infection with COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The first confirmed instance of person-person-spread with this virus in the U.S. was reported on January 30, 2020. See

the [current U.S. case count of infection with 2019-nCoV \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html).

Q: Am I at risk for novel coronavirus from a package or products shipping from China?

There is still a lot that is unknown about the newly emerged 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it spreads. Two other coronaviruses have emerged previously to cause severe illness in people (MERS and SARS). The virus that causes COVID-19 is more genetically related to SARS than MERS, but both are betacoronaviruses with their origins in bats. While we don't know for sure that this virus will behave the same way as SARS and MERS, we can use the information gained from both of these earlier coronaviruses to guide us. In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures. Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets. Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with imported goods and there have not been any cases of COVID-19 in the United States associated with imported goods. Information will be provided on the [2019 Novel Coronavirus website \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html) as it becomes available.

Q: Will warm weather stop the outbreak of COVID-19?

A: It is not yet known whether weather and temperature impact the spread of COVID-19. Some other viruses, like the common cold and flu, spread more during cold weather months but that does not mean it is impossible to become sick with these viruses during other months. At this time, it is not known whether the spread of COVID-19 will decrease when weather becomes warmer. There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features associated with COVID-19 and investigations are ongoing.

Q: Should I cancel or postpone my trip?

A: CDC provides recommendations on postponing or canceling travel. These are called travel notices and are based on assessment of the potential health risks involved with traveling to a certain area. A list of destinations with travel notices is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

Q: How are travelers from China being screened when they enter the United States?

A: At this time, American citizens, lawful permanent residents, family members (as specified in the Presidential Proclamation) who have been in China in the past 14 days will be allowed to enter the United States. Those travelers will be directed to one of 11 U.S. airports and will be screened for fever and symptoms and asked questions about their travel in China and exposure. Those travelers will have some level of restriction on their movement depending on their health and travel history. For more information about travelers from China being screened when they enter the United States. For more information (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/from-china.html>)

Q: Is it safe to travel to countries, other than China, where COVID-19 cases have occurred?

A: The situation is evolving. Stay up to date with [CDC's travel health notices](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/china#travel-notice) (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/china#travel-notice>) related to this outbreak. These notices will be updated as more information becomes available.

Q: What if I recently traveled to an affected area by COVID-19 and got sick?

A: If you were in a country with a COVID-19 outbreak and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, within 14 days after you left, you should

- Seek medical advice – Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Not travel on public transportation while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to avoid spreading the virus to others.
- Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

Q: 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 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) play distinct but complementary roles in regulating the importation of live animals and animal products into the United States. [CDC regulates](#) animals and animal products that pose a threat to human health, [USDA regulates](#) animals and animal products that pose a threat to agriculture; and [FWS regulates](#) importation of endangered species and wildlife that can harm the health and welfare of humans, the interests of agriculture, horticulture, or forestry, and the welfare and survival of wildlife resources.

Q: Should I be concerned about pets or other animals and COVID-19?

While this virus seems to have emerged from an animal source, it is now spreading from person-to-person. There is no reason to think that any animals including 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. For more information on the many benefits of pet ownership, as well as staying safe and healthy around animals including pets, livestock, and wildlife, visit CDC's [Healthy Pets, Healthy People website](https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/index.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/index.html>).

Q: Should I avoid contact with pets or other animals if I am sick?

You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. If you are sick with COVID-19, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask.

Footnotes

¹Fever may be subjective or confirmed

²Close contact is defined as—

a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case

– *or* –

b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

Source: CDC

For more information please visit the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak Page at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>