

Respiratory Disease Prevention

Human coronaviruses are common throughout the world and have been known to cause mild to moderate illnesses in people throughout the world. However, the strain of this virus that was first identified in Wuhan, China in late 2019 is a new strain. It was initially thought to be spread from animals to humans. However, it is now known to spread from person-to-person.

The World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have published advice for the public to prevent the coronavirus from spreading in the United States since there are documented cases here.

The recommendations are actions that you can take to protect yourself and family members from any respiratory illness including coronavirus and influenza include:

- Stay informed. Daily updates are added to the CDC website at www.cdc.gov.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for no less than 20 seconds. If you have to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, make sure that it has at least 60% alcohol in its list of ingredients. Clean hands after touching elevator buttons, public door handles, gas pump handles, grocery carts, public stair handrails, etc.)
- Avoid putting your hands in your mouth or rubbing your eyes with unwashed hands.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Do not have close contact with others who have flu-like symptoms.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a flexed elbow or tissue that can be immediately thrown away.
- Disinfect objects and surfaces that may be contaminated with germs. Viruses can survive on objects and surfaces for hours and days.
- Contact your health care professional or emergency room as often as needed.
- Contact your Employee Assistance Program, school officials or local mental health office for assistance as needed.

In the case that public health officials declare that individuals or communities must shelter in place at home for quarantine purposes after possible high-risk exposure to decrease the spread of any infectious disease, your emergency preparedness kit should include:

- One gallon of water per household member for at least three days.
- At least a three-day supply of food.
- At least a 30 day supply of medications.
- Thirty (30) day supply of equipment and supplies for family members with special needs
- Cash
- First aid kit
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and supplies
- Copies of important documents including doctor and pharmacy contact information, health history, medication list, insurance cards and papers, identification
- Disinfectant
- More information on preparing an emergency preparedness case can be found at www.ready.gov.