



COLORADO

Department of Public
Health & Environment

2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Public health is currently responding to an outbreak of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, which originated in Wuhan, China. This is a rapidly evolving situation, currently the United States has minimal confirmed cases.

What you need to know:

2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a virus (more specifically, a [coronavirus](#)) identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China. Early on, many of the patients in the outbreak in Wuhan, China reportedly had some link to a large seafood and animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. However, a growing number of patients reportedly have not had exposure to animal markets, indicating person-to-person spread is occurring. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people. The latest situation summary updates are available on CDC's web page [2019 Novel Coronavirus, Wuhan, China](#).

What are coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface. There are four main sub-groupings of coronaviruses, known as alpha, beta, gamma, and delta.

Human coronaviruses were first identified in the mid-1960s. The seven coronaviruses that can infect people are:

Common human coronaviruses

1. 229E (alpha coronavirus)
2. NL63 (alpha coronavirus)

3. OC43 (beta coronavirus)
4. HKU1 (beta coronavirus)

Other human coronaviruses

5. MERS-CoV (the beta coronavirus that causes Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, or MERS)
6. SARS-CoV (the beta coronavirus that causes severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS)

7. 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

People around the world commonly get infected with human coronaviruses 229E, NL63, OC43, and HKU1. These coronaviruses usually cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illnesses, like the common cold.

Sometimes coronaviruses that infect animals can evolve and make people sick and become a new human coronavirus. Three recent examples of this are 2019-nCoV, SARS-CoV, and MERS-CoV. SARS-nCoV caused a global outbreak in 2003 and is not currently circulating in humans. There have been no cases of MERS-CoV in the U.S. since 2014. Additional information about the evolving 2019 Novel Coronavirus can be found at the following website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

Common human coronaviruses may be identified when using a respiratory panel to assess ill residents for treatment. Respiratory panels for clinical use currently do not detect 2019-nCoV. *Currently the lab at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the only lab in the U.S. that can identify Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Testing in Colorado must be coordinated with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).*

Residents that are identified as having one of the common types of human coronavirus listed above can be safely cared for following standard precautions. You can review what standard precautions are by visiting the following website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/standard-precautions.html>.

This is an excellent opportunity to refresh yourselves and staff members on the use of standard precautions, which include respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette, and to make any necessary adjustments. Remember that this is respiratory season and there are many causes for respiratory illness circulating in our communities.

Things that you can do:

1. Follow good hand hygiene: alcohol-based hand gel is effective for coronavirus and other respiratory pathogens.
2. Get your flu vaccine if you have not received one. It is not too late to get one.
3. Stay at home if you are ill, and make sure that visitors and ill staff members stay at home when they are sick.

April Burdorf is available as a resource for your infection prevention related questions. Please feel free to reach out to her directly for infection control related questions at 303-692-3514 or April.Burdorf@state.co.us. If you are concerned that someone is ill with the 2019 Novel Coronavirus please call our epidemiology team at 303-692-2700. You can access information related to the Colorado specific response to this outbreak, including the most recent infection prevention guidance at the following web link:

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/2019-novel-coronavirus>.