

# Frequently Asked Questions about 2019 Novel Coronavirus

## Addressing Schools' and Parents' Concerns

February 6, 2020

### 1. What is 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?

2019-nCoV is a respiratory illness caused by a virus in the coronavirus family. It is called a "novel" coronavirus because it is a new type of coronavirus not seen before. It was first identified in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Because this is a new virus, experts are still learning about the virus.

### 2. How does 2019-nCoV spread?

2019-nCoV spreads from person-to-person when someone coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza virus is spread. Also, if a person's hands are contaminated with respiratory secretions containing virus, they can transfer the virus to things they touch like door handles and pens. Another person can touch the contaminated items then touch their eyes or mouth and become infected.

### 3. What are the symptoms of 2019-nCoV?

It takes 2 to 14 days after being infected for most people to show symptoms. Individuals with 2019-nCoV have a fever, usually above 100.4° F, with cough, chest pain, or shortness of breath. Other symptoms can include headache, sore throat, fatigue, and nasal congestion. 2019-nCoV can cause mild to severe respiratory illness.

### 4. How is 2019-nCoV treated?

Unlike influenza, there is no vaccine or medication for 2019-nCoV. Instead, treatment focuses on relieving symptoms and keeping the person comfortable.

### 5. Does 2019-nCoV pose a health risk to Monterey County?

Right now, there have only been 6 cases diagnosed in California and none in Monterey County. There have also been 6 individuals diagnosed in other states who recently traveled to China or had close contact with someone who was sick with 2019-nCoV. The risk of getting 2019-nCoV is very low unless a person has close contact with a person sick with 2019-nCoV or recently traveled to an area with a 2019-nCoV outbreak.

### 6. How can I keep from getting 2019-nCoV?

The same healthy habits we practice during influenza season can help prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



### Key Messages:

- The risk of getting sick with 2019-nCoV is currently very low in the U.S. and in Monterey County, unless a person has recently traveled to China.
- The Monterey County Health Department is working with local hospitals, doctors, schools, and other agencies to be prepared.

### Who to contact for more information?

**Monterey County Health Department**  
831-755-4521  
[www.mtyhd.org/2019nCoV](http://www.mtyhd.org/2019nCoV)

Follow us on Twitter:  
@MCHDPIO

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



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- Avoid touching your eyes or mouth with your hands.
- Clean or sanitize commonly touched surfaces like doorknobs, light switches, and telephones.
- Avoid people who appear ill. Stay back at least 6 feet from someone who appears sick.
- When possible, avoid traveling to an area where there is an outbreak of 2019-nCoV occurring.
- If you do feel ill, cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow, not your hands, and stay home until you are better.

### 7. How should I talk to children about 2019-nCoV?

Sometimes children may feel a sense of anxiety or nervousness based on what is being reported in the news. The following tips may help you talk to children about their feelings:

- Listen to your children. Reassure them that they are safe and try to focus on the facts.
- Allow them to ask questions. Help your children understand how the illness is spread.
- Make a game of showing children how to cough into their elbow or practicing good hand washing techniques.
- Embrace teachable moments. This may be a good time to talk to your child about how misunderstanding and misinformation can create fear.

### 8. What should schools do if they suspect there is someone ill with 2019-nCoV?

Call the Monterey County Health Department at 831-755-4521. Public health workers will assist schools in assessing the individual's risk of having 2019-nCoV by asking questions about travel history and symptoms. They will also provide guidance on any next steps that should be taken. If the individual is critically ill (for example, having trouble breathing), call 9-1-1 and provide as much information as possible.

### 9. Will schools be alerted if a 2019-nCoV case is confirmed in Monterey County?

Yes. The Monterey County Health Department will notify schools and the general public if an individual is confirmed to have 2019-nCoV in Monterey County. The Monterey County Health Department will also provide information about any risk to schools and the public at that time. The Health Department will guide schools and parents on any actions they may need to take.

### 10. What is the Health Department doing about 2019-nCoV?

Despite the low risk of a 2019-nCoV outbreak locally, we want to make sure you are aware of the facts and what proactive steps are being taken. The Monterey County Health Department is working closely with local hospitals, clinics, and other agencies to be prepared for a case of 2019-nCoV in Monterey County and to implement measures to stop the spread of the virus.



### Where can schools and parents go for more information?

- **Monterey County Health Department, Public Health Bureau Communicable Disease Unit**  
Phone: 831-755-4521 [www.mtyhd.org/2019nCoV](http://www.mtyhd.org/2019nCoV)
- **California Department of Public Health (CDPH)** [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

