

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): Frequently Asked Questions

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UNH Health & Wellness: (603) 862-9355

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General Information: COVID-19

Q: What is the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

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

Q: What is a novel coronavirus?

A: Human coronaviruses are common worldwide. Common human coronaviruses usually cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illnesses, like the common cold. A novel coronavirus (CoV) is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified.

Q: What is the source of COVID-19?

A: “Public health officials and partners are working hard to identify the source of COVID-19. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. Analysis of the genetic tree of this virus is ongoing to know the specific source of the virus.”

Q: What are the symptoms and complications of COVID-19?

A: Early/mild symptoms of COVID-19 illness caused by Coronavirus infection can include nasal congestion, sore throat, and achiness. Rarely, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea have been reported. More concerning symptoms reported for patients with COVID-19 have included fever (>100.4F), cough, and/or shortness of breath. These symptoms typically appear 2 to 14 days after exposure. Read more about [COVID-19 Symptoms](#).

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, *self-isolate and call your Primary Care Provider (PCP) or other health care clinician for guidance:*

- UNH Durham Campus, please call (603) 862-9355 to speak with a UNH Health & Wellness staff member.
- UNH Manchester and School of Law: Please contact your Primary Care Physician or local Urgent Care Clinic.

Testing for COVID-19 infection will be an important component of reducing the spread of the virus. Current guidelines allow for testing in individuals who have concerning symptoms; please discuss with your PCP or UNH Health & Wellness for testing status and recommendations.

Q: I am feeling very anxious and worried given all of the unknowns about COVID-19’s impact and spread. Is this normal? What can I do to take care of myself?

A: Feeling anxious, stressed, scared, and/or worried are normal reactions to the unknowns about a new virus, what we see and hear around us, and things that feel outside of our control. These emotions can help motivate us to be informed and take actions to protect ourselves and others:

- Get adequate sleep, eat well, move your body, do some things that help to relax your body and mind—these actions also strengthen our immune systems!
- Know the facts about the virus and getting accurate information from reliable sources.
- Take breaks from media, including social media.
- Acknowledge your feelings instead of suppressing them. It can be helpful to write down your feelings and list what is making you feel this way. Acknowledging feelings also includes acknowledging how others feel. Telling yourself or others not to worry, be stressed, or panic only tends to make ourselves and others feel worse.
- Visit Harvard’s resource, “[Managing Fears and Anxiety around the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#),” for more self-care ideas

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If you find the emotions you are experiencing are impacting your daily life and functioning, reach out for help:

- Students at UNH-Durham can contact Psychological and Counseling Services (PACS) 603-862-2090.
- Students at UNH-M can contact The Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester (MHCGM) on campus (603) 641-4170 or directly (603) 668-4111.
- Students at UNH Franklin Pierce School of Law can contact Riverbend Community Mental Health 603-228-1600 for an appointment or if crisis 1-844-743-5748.
- Employees can contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 1-800-424-1749.
- The [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) is available for those in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals: 1-800-273-8255.

Q: Why might someone blame or avoid individuals and groups [\(create stigma\) because of COVID-19?](#)

A: People in the U.S. may be worried or anxious about friends and relatives who are living in or visiting areas where COVID-19 is spreading. Some people are worried about the disease. Fear and anxiety can lead to social stigma, for example, towards Chinese or other Asian Americans or people who were in quarantine.

Stigma is discrimination against an identifiable group of people, a place, or a nation. Stigma is associated with a lack of knowledge about how COVID-19 spreads, a need to blame someone, fears about disease and death, and gossip that spreads rumors and myths.

Stigma hurts everyone by creating more fear or anger towards ordinary people instead of the disease that is causing the problem.

People can fight stigma and help, not hurt, others by providing social support. Counter stigma by learning and sharing facts. Communicating the facts that viruses do not target specific racial or ethnic groups and how COVID-19 actually spreads can help stop stigma.

If you have observed or experienced an incident of bias or hate, discrimination and/or harassment, please report the incident using the [report it! form](#) or contact the Affirmative Action and Equity Office at affirmation.equity@unh.edu or (603) 862-2930 Voice / (603) 862-1527 TTY / 7-1-1 Relay NH.

Transmission of COVID-19

Q: Who is susceptible to the novel coronavirus?

A: “[People of all ages can be infected](#) by COVID-19. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.”

Everyone should take steps to protect themselves from the virus, for example by washing their hands often and covering coughs and sneezes.

Q: How does the virus spread?

A: “This virus likely emerged from an animal source originally, but now seems to be spreading from person-to-person. It’s important to note that, in person-to-person transmission, some viruses are highly contagious (like measles), while other viruses are less so. At this time, it’s unclear how easily this virus is spreading between people. While CDC considers this a very serious public health risk, based on current information, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 to the general American public is considered low at this time. Here is what we do know about the [spread of newly emerged coronaviruses.](#)”

Q: Should I be tested?

UNH Health & Wellness is following the New Hampshire Division of Public Health guidelines for COVID-19 testing.

At this time, individuals without symptoms are not recommended for testing, regardless of risk. If you have a fever, or symptoms of respiratory illness, you may be considered for testing if:

- you are a health care provider.
- you have been exposed to others in a healthcare or long-term care setting.
- you had contact with large numbers of people who may need public health intervention.
- you are hospitalized with fever or respiratory illness.

If you believe you are a candidate for testing, please contact your PCP or Health & Wellness at (603) 862-9355 for further guidance.

If you have mild symptoms and not in need of medical care, please self-isolate at home and monitor for symptom progression. If your symptoms worsen, please contact your PCP or Health & Wellness at 603.862.9355 for further guidance.

Individuals who have mild symptoms but are not tested should self isolate until at least 7 days have passed since the onset of symptoms, and at least 72 hrs. have passed since their recovery.

Q: What should I do if I have close contact with a person who is diagnosed with COVID-19 infection?

A: The University of New Hampshire is following all recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

If there is a confirmed or presumptive positive case of COVID-19 illness identified in a UNH student, staff or faculty member, the campus will be informed with details and recommendations. In the more likely instance of a UNH community member coming in close contact with a person who is later diagnosed with COVID-19 infection:

- The contact will be advised to begin a 14-day self-isolation with monitoring for symptoms of illness. They are to practice social distancing and should not come to campus. If a significant fever (temperature >100.4), cough or shortness of breath were to develop, they should call their PCP or UNH Health & Wellness for guidance. According to NH DHHS, “household members such as family members, including children, of quarantined individuals are not required to quarantine. As long as they remain asymptomatic, they can leave the home and can go to public places like school and work. If the person being quarantined develops illness, household members must then also stay home on quarantine.”
- Anyone who has contact with asymptomatic contacts are considered at low risk. No self-isolation is recommended or required. Self-monitoring for symptoms is advised. If significant fever (temperature >100.4), cough or shortness of breath were to develop, they should call their PCP or UNH Health & Wellness for guidance.
- Travelers returning from countries with CDC risk category Level 3 or higher are advised to maintain 14-day self-isolation with monitoring for symptoms of illness. They are to practice social distancing and should not come to campus. If significant fever (temperature >100.4), cough or shortness of breath were to develop, they should call their PCP or UNH Health & Wellness for guidance.

Q: How do I self-isolate?

A: For fourteen days:

- Stay at home with social restrictions. Do not go to work, classes, or other social activities. Avoid activities in public.
- If possible, use a separate bathroom from “household members”.

- If around, other people, practice social distancing (about 6 feet or 2 meters).
- Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride shares.
- Self-monitor for fever (>100.4F), cough, and/or shortness of breath. If you experience symptoms, call Health & Wellness at 603-862-9355, your primary care physician, or a local urgent care clinic for guidance.
- As long as you remain asymptomatic, other “household members” can leave the home and can go to public spaces like school and work. If the person in self-isolation develops symptoms, “household members” must then also stay home and self-isolate.

Q: Should people be concerned about handling packages or other items delivered from countries with the virus?

A: “There is still a lot that is unknown about the newly emerged 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it spreads. 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.](#)”

Q: How does my risk of contracting the flu differ from the coronavirus?

A: “[CDC estimates](#) that so far this season there have been at least 32 million flu illnesses, 310,000 hospitalizations and 18,000 deaths from flu.” Refer to [transmission information from the](#) CDC for up-to-date information about current cases of COVID-19 in the United States.

General Illness Prevention

Q: What can I do to help stop the spread of colds, flu and/or the coronavirus?

A: While the immediate risk of this new coronavirus to the American public is believed to be low at this time, everyone can do their part to help respond to this emerging public health emergency by following the CDC recommendations for everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses (colds, flu, Coronavirus), including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home and avoid public places when sick (i.e. social distancing)
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid being within 6 feet (close contact) of a person who is sick
- Avoid sharing drinks, smoking/vaping devices, or other utensils or objects that may transmit saliva
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Get a flu vaccine.

Q: Do I need to wear a mask?

A: Routine use of a mask is not recommended for healthy individuals. Anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 should wear a mask any time there is close contact (within six feet) of others or when using common areas, like a shared bathroom. If your sick roommate is not covering sneezes and coughs, you may also consider wearing a mask when you are within close proximity (within six feet).

Q: Should individuals with an underlying health condition isolate themselves or avoid classes to minimize their risk of being infected with the coronavirus?

A: “If you are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, you should: stock up on supplies; take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others; when you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick; limit close contact and wash your hands often; and avoid crowds, cruise travel, and non-essential travel. If there is an outbreak in your community, stay home as much as possible. Watch for symptoms and emergency signs. More information on how to prepare, what to do if you get sick, and how communities and caregivers can support those at higher risk is available on [People at Risk for Serious Illness from COVID-19](#)”

Health & Wellness is prepared to partner with students’ medical providers to discuss specifics. If you are on the UNH Durham campus, Health & Wellness has Health Resource Nurses who serve as the contact point for concerned students, and students can contact them for information and guidance by calling (603) 862-9355. If you are on UNH Manchester or School of Law campuses, please contact your primary care physician or local Urgent Care Clinic. Employees with an underlying health condition should work with their healthcare provider for information and guidance.

Q: Should I be cleaning my residence hall, apartment, etc. with industrial-strength cleaning solutions?

A: Perform routine environmental cleaning. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, countertops). Read [CDC's interim environmental cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#) for community members and people isolated in home care. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label.

If you live on campus, in order to avoid the risk of a chemical reaction with disinfectants being used by UNH Facilities, Housing and Dining, please do not purchase or bring any cleaning agents for use on campus, particularly chlorine-based products, without prior approval from Environmental Health and Safety.

FYI - Staff in UNH Facilities, Housing and Dining have increased routine environmental cleaning including disinfecting frequently touched surfaces on campus like handrails, doorknobs and light switches, and will be placing disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer in all classrooms, residence and dining halls, and areas used by the general public to help decrease the spread of viruses.

Q: How do I clean my cell phone?

A: The [CDC recommends](#) the following for preventing the spread of infectious diseases: “Use disinfecting wipes on electronic items that are touched often, such as phones and computers. Pay close attention to the directions for using disinfecting wipes. It may be necessary to use more than one wipe to keep the surface wet for the stated length of contact time. Make sure that the electronics can withstand the use of liquids for cleaning and disinfecting.”

Q: What do I do if my roommate is sick with cold or flu?

A: If your roommate or someone you have frequent/close contact with is sick:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Don’t share household items like towels, eating utensils, dishes, cups, etc.
- Clean common surfaces, such as doorknobs, handles, room surfaces, light switches etc. Use a standard household disinfectant. Wash your hands after cleaning the area.
- Be helpful, but protect yourself. You can still care for your roommate. You can offer to pick up some Kleenex or get them a meal, but try to avoid close contact with your sick roommate.

Remind sick roommates to prevent others from getting sick. The sick person should remember to cover coughs and sneezes and to wash hands frequently (especially after coughing, sneezing, or disposing of used tissue in the trash). The sick person should also wear a mask any time there is close contact (within six feet) of others or when using common areas, like a shared bathroom. If your sick roommate is not covering sneezes and coughs, you should consider wearing a mask when you are within close proximity (within six feet).

Following these precautions will decrease your risk of becoming ill, but if you are sharing space with someone who is sick, you should monitor yourself. If you develop fever (>100.4F, cough, shortness of breath) after contact with the sick person,

- UNH Durham: Contact Health & Wellness, 603-862-9355 for information and care.
- UNH Manchester & School of Law: Contact your PCP or local Urgent Care Center.

Q: Is it safe to attend class when others are coughing and sneezing?

A: Coughing and sneezing is one way to spread illnesses and diseases such as colds, flu. Therefore, it is important for individuals who are ill to [practice hygiene as recommended by the CDC](#). If a person is ill, they should try and distance self from others include staying home from work, classes or social activities. Those who are well should avoid close contact with people who are sick.

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

A: There is no evidence that pets or other animals in the United States can transmit or become sick with COVID-19. In general, it is best practice to wash hands before and after touching animals to prevent the spread of diseases. *If you are sick with COVID-19*, the CDC recommends limiting contact with pets (e.g., avoiding petting, snuggling, being licked, sharing food) and having another member of your household care for the pet while you are sick if possible. If you are unable to avoid contact, wash your hands before and after interacting with them and wear a mask.

Travel Information & Country-Specific Precautions

Q: What are the current global travel advisories?

A: Travel advisories from the CDC currently include the following countries:

- Level 3 Travel Warning (avoid all nonessential travel due to widespread community transmission):
 - **China, Iran, and [most countries in Europe](#) and [United Kingdom and Ireland](#)**. CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel. Entry of foreign nationals from these destinations has been suspended.
 - **South Korea** - CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel
- Level 2 Travel Alert (practice enhanced precautions due to sustained community transmission): [Global Travel](#)

As of March 12, 2020, the U.S. Department of State also [announced a health advisory](#) for U.S. citizens to reconsider travel abroad. “Many areas throughout the world are now experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks and taking action that may limit traveler mobility, including quarantines and border restrictions. Even countries, jurisdictions, or areas where cases have not been reported may restrict travel without notice.”

Q: Should I travel within the US or change my travel plans?

“CDC does not generally issue advisories or restrictions for travel within the United States. However, cases of COVID-19 have been reported in many states, and some areas are experiencing community spread of the disease. Crowded travel settings, like airports, may increase your risk of exposure to COVID-19, if there are other travelers with COVID-19. There are several things you should consider when deciding whether it is safe for you to travel.” [Read CDC’s travel considerations here.](#)

Q: What if I recently traveled to a [Level 3 Warning country](#)?

A: If you spent time in the specified countries above during the past 14 days:

- Stay home for 14 days from the time you return from travel, monitor your health and practice social distancing. Social distancing means staying out of crowded places, avoiding group gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible.
- If you get sick with fever (100.4°F/38°C or higher), cough, or have trouble breathing
 - Seek medical advice. Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room.
 - Tell your doctor about your recent travel and your symptoms.
 - Avoid contact with others.
- Do not travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.

Q: What are the enhanced precautions recommended for Level 2 Alert countries/global travel?

A: Because older adults and those with chronic medical conditions may be at higher risk for severe disease, people in these groups should discuss travel with a healthcare provider and consider postponing nonessential travel.

If you must travel abroad, take the following steps:

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
- Travelers should monitor their health during travel and after travel and limit interactions at large gatherings with other for 14 days after returning to the United States.

Domestic & Local Updates

Q: How many cases of the coronavirus are there in the United States?

A: With the evolving nature of the virus in the United States, [check here for updated information regarding the coronavirus in the U.S.](#)

Q: Are there cases of the virus on the UNH campus?

A: There are NO cases of the virus on the campus at this time. However, NH Division of Public Health Services has identified an increasing number of positive cases in NH. Keep track at <https://www.nh.gov/covid19>.

Q: How will I know if there is a case of the coronavirus on campus?

A: If there is a confirmed case of the coronavirus on campus, the University will inform the UNH community and provide information on how the campus will prevent the spread of the illness and what each member of the community do to help prevent further spread of the virus.

Q: Where can I get more information on the virus and what UNH is doing to protect the community?

A: The Health & Wellness website has regular updates on the virus and UNH's efforts to protect the community: <https://www.unh.edu/health/health-alerts/health-alert-novel-new-coronavirus>

COVID-19: Glossary of Terms

The following is a list of terms used widely with regard to COVID-19.

Flattening the curve (Harvard): refers to the epidemic curve, a statistical chart used to visualize the number of new cases over a given period of time during a disease outbreak. Flattening the curve is shorthand for implementing mitigation strategies to slow things down, so that fewer new cases develop over a longer period of time. This increases the chances that hospitals and other healthcare facilities will be equipped to handle any influx of patients.

Isolation and quarantine help protect the public by preventing exposure to people who have or may have a contagious disease.

- Isolation separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.
- Quarantine separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.

Social distancing: The CDC defines social distancing as "remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet) from others when possible."

Examples include working from home, closing schools, canceling large gatherings

Close contact (CDC): a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters), of a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time (such as caring for or visiting the patient; or sitting within 6 feet of the patient in a healthcare waiting area or room); or b) having unprotected direct contact with infectious secretions or excretions of the patient (e.g., being coughed on, touching used tissues with a bare hand).

Factors for consideration include the duration of exposure (e.g., longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk), clinical symptoms of the patient (e.g., coughing likely increases exposure risk) and whether the patient was wearing a facemask (which can efficiently block respiratory secretions from contaminating others and the environment).

Data are insufficient to precisely define the duration of time that constitutes a prolonged exposure. However, until more is known about transmission risks, it is reasonable to consider an exposure greater than a few minutes as a prolonged exposure. Brief interactions are less likely to result in transmission; however, clinical symptoms of the patient and type of interaction (e.g., did the patient cough directly into the face of the HCP) remain important.

Additional Resources

- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – CDC)
- [Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Current Situation](#) (New Hampshire Public Health Services)
- [State of NH Public Health Guidance](#) (NH Department of Health & Human Services)
 - NH Residents can call 2-1-1 with questions
- [COVID-19 Advice for the Public](#) (World Health Organization)
- [2019 Novel Coronavirus: What Campuses Need to Know](#) (American College Health Association)
- [Travel Notices Related to COVID-19](#) (CDC)
- [Smart Travelers Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) (U.S. Department of State)
- [Spring Break Travel](#) (CDC)

- [Coronavirus Resource Center](#) (Johns Hopkins University)
- [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 1-800-273-8255

