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## **Darien Health Department: What We Know Now About the Coronavirus**

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As has been reportedly widely in the news, a novel viral infection has been identified in the region of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China which has made thousands ill, claimed over 50 lives and has led to massive, global public health effort to contain the illness.

*— This is an announcement from Darien Health Department, incorporating information from the Centers for Disease Control and Connecticut Public Health Department.*

At the moment, the potential global impact of this virus is uncertain. However, it has captured the attention of our world leaders in the realm of public health, medicine and government.

Here's a summary of what we know now:

***What is a novel Coronavirus (2019 n-CoV)?***

According to the CDC, coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats.

Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with MERS and SARS. Many of the patients in the outbreak caused by 2019-n-Cov in Wuhan, China had some link to a large seafood and live animal markets, 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 likely occurring.

When person-to-person spread has occurred with MERS and SARS, it is thought to have happened via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread.

There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features associated with 2019-nCoV and investigations are ongoing.

***How does the 2019 n-Cov present [that is, what signs are there to check for]?***

According to the CDC, most patients with confirmed 2019-nCoV infection have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath.

***How does the virus spread?***

This virus likely originated from an animal source but now seems to be spreading from person-to-person.

As the CDC states, it is important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some viruses are highly contagious, while other viruses are less so.

It's not clear how easily 2019-nCoV spreads from person-to-person. The prevailing thought [*to repeat what was said above*] is that transmission happens mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread.

***THERE'S NO VACCINE***

***BUT DO THIS TO REDUCE THE CHANCE OF GETTING IT***

***Is there a treatment for 2019n-CoV?***

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. Per the CDC, the best way to prevent

infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

At this time, 2019-nCoV has not been found to be spreading in the United States, so there are no additional precautions recommended for the general public to take.

However, as a precaution, you should always do the following:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- 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.

***How has this impacted citizens of the United States? Who is at risk?***

To date, five cases of 2019-nCoV have been reported in the United States. The cases have been identified in Arizona, California, Illinois and Washington state. Each patient recently returned from Wuhan. We have not seen any cases in the U.S. from people who have not been to Wuhan.

This situation will likely change as it now appears that the virus can be spread from person to person, much like influenza.

***What should one do if they have recently traveled to Wuhan, China?***

The Centers for Disease Control says that if you were in the city of Wuhan and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, within 14 days after leaving that city, you should:

—Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor’s office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.

—Avoid contact with others.

—Not travel 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. Use an

alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

***Is it safe to travel to China or other countries where 2019-nCoV 2019 cases have occurred?***

According to their website, the CDC has issued at a Level 3 Travel Health Notice recommending people avoid all non-essential travel to Hubei Province, China, including Wuhan.

CDC has also issued a Level 1 Travel Health Notice for the rest of China: Practice Usual Precautions.

The notice advises travelers to other parts of China to protect their health by avoiding contact with sick people, avoiding animals (alive or dead) and animal markets, and washing their hands often. There may be new recommendations in the short term.

***Can 2019 n-CoV be treated?***

At the moment, there are no specific antiviral treatments recommended for 2019-nCoV infection. People infected with 2019-nCoV should receive supportive care.

***Should I be tested for 2019-nCoV?***

If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after travel from Wuhan, China, the CDC recommends that you should call ahead to a healthcare provider and mention your recent travel or close contact.

If you have had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from this area, you should call ahead to a healthcare provider and mention your recent travel or close contact.

Your healthcare provider will work with the state's public health department and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for 2019-nCoV.

***How are persons tested for 2019-nCoV?***

At this time, diagnostic testing for 2019-nCoV can be conducted only at CDC and local health departments are working closely with the Connecticut Department of Public Health as this situation evolves.

If an individual presents with coronavirus symptoms, State and local health departments have been advised to notify CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at 770-488-7100 to report and determine whether testing for 2019-nCoV at CDC is indicated.

The EOC will assist local/state health departments to collect, store, and ship specimens appropriately to CDC, including during after hours or on weekends/holidays.

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***How can I stay updated?***

You can access all of the latest information and updates [via the CDC website](#), (CDC.Gov). We will do our best to continue to update our website as the situation evolves.