

ALL UNIVERSITY MESSAGE

Dear Members of the University of New Mexico Community,

We are writing to share information about an emerging outbreak of a respiratory disease caused by [a new strain of a well-known virus, coronavirus](#), first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province of China. As of today, January 31, 2020, six cases have been detected in the United States among individuals who have traveled to the affected area in China. ***There have been no cases detected in New Mexico, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the risk inside the general United States is very low.***

What is novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?

2019-nCoV is a newly identified coronavirus that is causing an outbreak of pneumonia illness. It was first identified in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.

Since then, the virus has been identified in multiple other countries, including cases in the U.S.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [human coronaviruses](#) are common throughout the world and usually cause mild to moderate illness in people. This new virus is a public health concern because:

- It is newly identified, so much is still unknown about it.
- Two other human coronaviruses, MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV, have caused severe illness.

What is the risk?

The CDC considers this new virus a public health concern based on current information. However, the immediate health risk to the general US public is considered low at this time. The CDC and the World Health Organization are closely monitoring the situation and providing ongoing guidance.

Symptoms and transmission:

[Symptoms](#) may be flu-like, ranging from mild to serious, and include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing.

Person-to-person spread is occurring, although it's unclear exactly how it is transmitted and how easily the virus spreads between people.



If you travel to/through Wuhan or other parts of China:

The CDC recommends [avoiding non-essential travel to Wuhan, China](#). Chinese officials have closed transport within and out of Wuhan, including buses, subways, trains, and the airport. If you must travel:

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid animals (alive or dead), animal markets, and products that come from animals (such as uncooked meat).
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Older adults and travelers with underlying health issues may be at risk for more severe disease and should discuss travel to Wuhan with their health care provider.

Those with upcoming travel to China should contact the UNM Global Education Office (GEO). Phone: 505-277-4032; email: studyabd@unm.edu

Prevention:

There is no vaccine to prevent this virus, and the [CDC](#) advises that the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

Currently, 2019-nCoV [has not been found to be spreading in the U.S.](#), so there are no additional precautions recommended for the general public to take.

Here are everyday actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses:

- 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.

Recommendations for people with respiratory symptoms:

If you have symptoms of fever, cough, and/or difficulty breathing and in the last 14 days you:

- Traveled to Wuhan, or
- Visited an affected region in China, or
- Had close contact with someone who had traveled to an affected region in China and had respiratory symptoms.



You should:

- Call the New Mexico Department of Health at (505) 827-0006.
- 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.
- Do not travel while sick. Please do not get on public transportation
- 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. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available

General Respiratory Illness Information

In addition, flu activity continues to be high in New Mexico. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to take the same everyday actions as above to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include getting a flu shot, avoiding those with the flu, washing your hands, covering coughs/sneezes in your elbow/sleeve and, if ill, staying home until you are fever-free for 24 hours. If you do become ill, seek medical attention within the first 48 hours of symptoms.

Students who use Student Health & Counseling should call before coming and identify yourself as having flu-like symptoms (505-277-3136). Students may also consult with their regular health care provider or seek treatment at the student health provider for their program if overseas.

Students, Faculty and Staff who have not received the flu vaccine yet should check your local pharmacy or doctor's office.

The University of New Mexico will continue to monitor the situation using guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC) and New Mexico Department of Health. Please find additional resource links below.

Resources:

- [Novel Coronavirus Information - CDC](#)
- [Novel Coronavirus Information - New Mexico Department of Health](#)

Sincerely,

Byron Piatt
University Emergency Manager

In conjunction with UNM Emergency Management, UNM Student Health & Counseling, and UNMH Infection Control and Epidemiology, and Employee and Occupational Health Services.

