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What is coronavirus?

Coronavirus or *novel coronavirus* (COVID-19) is a new virus strain spreading from person to person in China and other countries, including the United States. In some instances, cases outside of China have been associated with individuals who traveled through or from China. The Centers for Disease Control and Protection (CDC) and health professionals at large are concerned because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness, pneumonia, and death.

As of February 23, there were 76,936 reported cases in mainland China and 1,875 cases in locations outside mainland China (1). There have been 2,462 associated deaths worldwide.¹ As of March 2, six fatalities have been reported in the U.S.² and Georgia Governor Brian Kemp [confirmed two cases](#) in Fulton County related to travel in Italy. There are no known vaccines for novel coronavirus at this time.

How has novel coronavirus impacted the U.S.?

According to the CDC, as of February 23, there have been 14 coronavirus cases diagnosed in the following six states:

- Arizona (one case)
- California (eight)
- Illinois (two)
- Massachusetts (one)
- Washington (one), and
- Wisconsin (one)

Twelve of these 14 cases were related to travel to China, and two cases occurred through person-to-person transmission to close household contacts of a person with confirmed COVID-19. An additional 39 cases were reported among repatriated U.S. citizens, residents, and their families returning from Hubei province, China (three), and from the Diamond Princess cruise ship that was docked in Yokohama, Japan (36). There have been 53 cases within the United States.³ The two cases since reported in Georgia are in addition to the report made by the CDC on February 23.

How does novel coronavirus spread?

While much is still being learned about this new virus, it is currently thought to spread via:

- Respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes
- Within people who are in close contact with each other (within 6 feet)⁴

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms for novel coronavirus are very similar to those associated with the common cold and influenza – which include a fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. People who have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus have reported symptoms appeared in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after being initially exposed.

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6908e1.htm?s_cid=mm6908e1_e&deliveryName=USCDC_921-DM20815

² <https://www.cbsnews.com/live-updates/coronavirus-outbreak-death-toll-us-infections-latest-news-updates-2020-03-03/>

³ https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6908e1.htm?s_cid=mm6908e1_e&deliveryName=USCDC_921-DM20815

⁴ <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/NovelCoronavirusFactSheet.pdf>

Coronavirus Fact Sheet



How can I protect myself from novel coronavirus?

Staying informed on the spread of this virus is a good first step. We recommend you follow the updates from the CDC on its dedicated website located here:

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

The College will be following guidance from the CDC as well as other health and safety agencies in the region. But some specific things you can do include:

Being very prudent with your travel plans. But, if you are traveling overseas (to China but also to other places) we encourage you to follow the CDC's guidance located here:

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

As of now, the virus has not been spreading widely in the U.S., so there are no additional precautions recommended for domestic travel, but the CDC site a listing of states that have confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus.

Other steps you can take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent coronavirus:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoiding contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home and avoiding close contact with others if you feel sick
- Covering your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.

Who is most susceptible to novel coronavirus?

Health officials and organizations are still learning about this virus. Although coronavirus originated geographically in Wuhan, China, the disease is not specific to any ethnic group. Being of Chinese ancestry – or any other ancestry – does not make a person more vulnerable to this illness.

Who do I contact if I feel like I might be sick or have contracted the coronavirus?

If you have traveled to an affected geographic area within the past 14 days or have been in contact with someone suspected of or confirmed to have COVID-19 and are experiencing fever, cough or trouble breathing, please contact your healthcare provider for assessment.

If you are on campus and are exhibiting flu-like symptoms, please go to or contact the Student Health Center at (404) 215-2637. Faculty and staff should contact the Student/Employee Health and Wellness Center at the Morehouse School of Medicine at (404) 756-1241.

If you are having chest pain, serious difficulty breathing, or another type of medical emergency, please call 911 or Morehouse Public Safety at (404) 215-2666.

If you are off campus and feel ill, contact or visit your primary care physician or go to urgent care before returning to work or class.