Travelers' Health

Novel Coronavirus in China

Warning - Level 3, Avoid Nonessential Travel

Alert - Level 2, Practice Enhanced Precautions

Watch - Level 1, Practice Usual Precautions

Key Points

- There is an ongoing outbreak of pneumonia first identified in Wuhan, China, caused by a novel (new) coronaviru
- Person-to-person spread is occurring, although it's unclear how easily the virus spreads between people.
- Preliminary information suggests that older adults and people with underlying health conditions may be at increased risk for severe disease from this virus.
- Travelers to Wuhan, China, should avoid contact with sick people, animals (alive or dead), and animal markets.
- Travelers from Wuhan to the United States, and other countries, may be asked questions about their health and travel history upon arrival.
- The situation is evolving. This notice will be updated as more information becomes available.

What is the current situation?

A novel (new) coronavirus is causing an outbreak of pneumonia illness in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Th outbreak began in early December 2019 and continues to expand in scope and magnitude. Global surveillance is in the early stages and we expect more cases to be confirmed in China and beyond its borders. Signs and symptoms of this illness include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Initially some patients were linked to the Wuhan South China Seafood City (also called the South China Seafood Wholesale Market and the Hua Nan Seafood Market). However, sin closing the market on January 1, 2020, more cases have been identified suggesting that some person-to-person spread occurring though it's unclear how easily this virus is spreading between people.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. There are several known coronaviruses that infect people and usually onl cause mild respiratory disease, such as the common cold. However, at least two previously identified coronaviruses h caused severe disease — severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV). SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV have been ruled out as the cause of the current outbre

Chinese health officials have reported hundreds of cases in the city of Wuhan and severe illness has been reported, including deaths. Cases have also been identified in travelers from Wuhan to other parts of China and other countrie This novel coronavirus has the potential to cause severe disease and death. Preliminary information suggests this is especially true among the elderly and those people with underlying health problems or compromised immune syste Many characteristics of this novel coronavirus and how it may affect people are still unclear.

In response to this outbreak, Chinese officials have started exit screening for travelers leaving the city of Wuhan and several countries and territories in the region are reported to have implemented health screening of travelers arriving from Wuhan.

On arrival to the United States, travelers from Wuhan may undergo health screening, including having their temperature taken and filling out a symptom questionnaire. Travelers with signs and symptoms of illness (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing) will have an additional health assessment.

What can travelers do to protect themselves and others?

Travelers to Wuhan should

- 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 travelers and those with underlying health issues may be at risk for more severe disease and should discuss travel to Wuhan with their healthcare provider.

If you traveled to Wuhan and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, 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. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Clinician Information

Healthcare providers should obtain a detailed travel history for patients with fever and respiratory symptoms. For patients who traveled to Wuhan on or after December 1, 2019 and had onset of illness within 2 weeks of leaving, consider the novel coronavirus outbreak in China when evaluating a patient with these symptoms and notify infection control personnel and your local health department immediately.

Although routes of transmission have yet to be definitively determined, CDC recommends a cautious approach to interacting with patients under investigation. Ask such patients to wear a surgical mask as soon as they are identified. Conduct their evaluation in a private room with the door closed, ideally an airborne infection isolation room, if available. Personnel entering the room should use standard precautions, contact precautions, and airborne precautions and use eye protection (goggles or a face shield). For additional infection control guidance, visit CDC's Infection Control webpage.

For additional information, please see:

- Novel Coronavirus 2019, Wuhan, China
- Health Alert Notice, Outbreak of Pneumonia of Unknown Etiology (PUE) in Wuhan, China

- WHO, Coronavirus

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