

COVID-19 (2019 Novel Coronavirus) Frequently Asked Questions for Employers

What is 2019 novel coronavirus?

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus identified in Wuhan, China that causes respiratory illness in people. It can cause illnesses from the common cold to more severe diseases like pneumonia.

How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is a respiratory virus that spreads primarily when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What if a person recently traveled to China?

- Screenings have been instituted at 11 U.S. airports (including Dulles International Airport) for travelers returning from China. Effective Feb. 2, U.S. citizens returning home from the **Hubei province** in China will undergo a mandatory quarantine of up to 14 days.
- Any citizen returning from the rest of mainland China will undergo a health screening at selected ports of entry.
 - If sick travelers are identified, they are evaluated and are directed to medical care as needed.
 - Those without symptoms will be asked to monitor their health for 14 days, which may require time off from work or school.

How can I prevent COVID-19?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Simple actions can help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- 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 with at least 60% alcohol.
- 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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe. (CDC)

Should masks be worn to prevent COVID-19?

No. CDC does not currently recommend the use of face masks among the general public. While limited person-to-person spread among close contacts has been detected, this virus is not currently spreading in the community in the United States. (CDC)

Can COVID-19 be transmitted from packaging from China?

No. People receiving packages are not at risk of contracting the new coronavirus. From experience with other coronaviruses, we know that these types of viruses don't survive long on objects, such as letters or packages. (WHO)

For more information visit the Howard County Health Department website at www.hchealth.org.