

February 6, 2020

Dear Community Partner,

As you may know, China is experiencing an expanding outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). This virus emerged in Hubei Province, China in late December 2019, and cases have been detected in several countries internationally and in the United States. Currently, the risk to the general public in the United States is low. There is no evidence that 2019-nCoV is currently spreading in Washington.

Because the outbreak is expanding in China, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) has recommended people avoid all non-essential travel to China. Many American commercial airlines have canceled flights to China and it is unclear when the do-not-travel recommendation will be lifted.

Additionally, starting February 2, 2020, the CDC and Washington State Department of Health have made additional recommendations for travelers coming from China:

1. All travelers from Hubei Province will be placed in mandatory quarantine for 14 days from their departure date from Hubei Province. These travelers will be monitored for symptoms by public health authorities. The number of people in this category is expected to be very small.
2. All travelers from the rest of mainland China will be told to remain at home or in a comparable setting, to the extent possible, for 14 days from their departure date from China. These travelers will be told to avoid congregate settings, limit public activities, and practice social distancing. This is called voluntary self-quarantine and includes staying home from work, school, or childcare. These travelers will self-monitor for symptoms with periodic check-ins from public health.

All travelers will receive instruction around quarantine and symptoms to look for by the CDC Division of Global Migration & Quarantine at the airport of their arrival. Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) will be involved in communicating with returning travelers once they arrive home in Spokane County. Travelers who become ill during their monitoring period will be provided instructions on how to seek medical care with guidance from SRHD staff.

**These recommendations only apply to travelers arriving from China on or after February 2, 2020.**

We fully understand the impact this will have on individuals, families, schools, and businesses. We ask for cooperation with these new recommendations around quarantine after travel to China to ensure the safety of our community by limiting opportunities for disease transmission in the event someone becomes ill.

**To prevent infection with 2019-nCoV:** People do not need to take special precautions beyond what is normally recommended to prevent the spread of germs. This includes: frequent hand washing with soap and warm water; avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands; avoid contact with people who are sick; stay home while sick and avoid close contact with others; and cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throwing the tissue in the trash and washing hands.

As new information emerges, please remind your community that the risk of 2019-nCoV is not connected with race, ethnicity, or nationality. Stigma will not help fight the illness. Sharing accurate information during a time of heightened concern is one of the best things we can do to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

For more information, please go to: [doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus](https://doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus)

For questions, contact SRHD Epidemiology at 509-324-1442.



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