FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
ABOUT NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

February 11, 2020

What is coronavirus?
Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing respiratory illness in people and others circulating among animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread between people. Previous coronavirus outbreaks have included severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believes the risk to the American public of becoming infected with this novel coronavirus is low.

How do I prevent the spread of viruses, including coronavirus?

- Wash hands often with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if water is not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.

Should I stay home?
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new guidance for people who have arrived from mainland China on February 3 or later. These individuals are being asked to stay home and monitor their health for 14 days following their last day in mainland China.

- Please contact emphlth@uw.edu for more information and coordinate with health and safety support professionals.
- UW Medicine personnel should contact Employee Health Services (UWMC Montlake at 206-598-4848, UWMC Northwest at 206-668-1625, or Harborview Medical Center at 206-744-3081) for further information, support and coordination.

Anyone who arrived to the U.S. on Feb. 2 or earlier and has no symptoms can continue normal activities, such as going to class or coming to work, and should
watch for any health changes for 14 days after leaving mainland China. Contact a health-care provider if you develop a fever, cough or experience difficulty breathing.

Should I wear a mask?

You should wear a mask if you have a respiratory issue (such as a cough or difficulty breathing) and are in public, especially in a clinic or hospital. Some people may choose to wear a mask in public as their personal preference even if they are not sick.

You do not need to wear a mask if you are not sick.

How should I clean and disinfect communal spaces?

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces (e.g., door knobs, tables, keyboards light switches). Use a disinfectant registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or a 10% bleach/water solution to clean surfaces.

How does the UW clean and disinfect?

The University’s custodial cleaning program uses an EPA-registered disinfectant to clean touchpoints, public and common area restrooms and kitchens daily. Students living in on-campus housing are expected to clean the private bathrooms in their residences and are provided cleaning instructions.

What do I do if I feel sick?

If you recently returned from Wuhan or another outbreak-affected region AND are experiencing fever and respiratory symptoms (such as coughing or difficulty breathing), call your health-care provider or nurse advice line. Do not show up at a clinic or urgent care without calling first. Your provider will need to take special measures to protect other people in the clinic.

- Students on the UW’s Seattle campus may contact Hall Health Center.
- Students at UW Bothell should contact their usual health care provider or a UW Medicine facility.
- Students at UW Tacoma should contact their usual health care provider or Franciscan Prompt Care at St. Joseph.
- Faculty, staff and visiting scholars should contact their primary care provider or a UW Medicine facility.

Monitor your symptoms closely. Remember that the likelihood is low that you have coronavirus. Take your temperature if you believe you have a fever.
**Stay home from school and work** until at least 24 hours after your fever ends. If you must go out of the house or be around others, wear a mask and avoid close contact. Be especially careful around infants and small children as well as people who have compromised immune systems and/or are over the age of 65.

**Take care of yourself.** Rest as much as possible. Drink lots of fluids.

**Will the UW cancel classes?**

There are no plans to cancel classes due to the low risk to the UW community.

**I’m hosting an event on campus. Should I cancel it?**

Campus events should proceed as normal; there are no restrictions on events at this time. According to public health officials, the risk of coronavirus to the UW community is low. There is no need to take additional precautions beyond those you would normally take to avoid the spread of colds and viruses during flu season.

**Can I travel to China?**

Effective February 4, 2020, the University has restricted all official travel to China by students, faculty and staff. These restrictions are in effect until further notice. For details on these new restrictions, please visit [http://bit.ly/UW-China-Travel](http://bit.ly/UW-China-Travel).

Members of the UW community who are currently in China should check with the UW Global Travel Security team by sending an email to travelemergency@uw.edu. In case of emergency or crisis, travelers can call the 24/7 emergency line at 206.632.0153.

**What should a person do who is traveling to the U.S. from China?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is recommending all travelers from China (including students, staff and faculty) arriving in the U.S. after **February 2, 2020** stay at home away from others and monitor their health for 14 days.

There is no recommendation for asymptomatic persons arriving from China before February 2 to restrict their activities. All travelers from China arriving **on or before February 2, 2020** can continue to attend school and should take the following steps:

- Watch for any changes in your health for 14 days after leaving China.
- If you get a fever or develop a cough or difficulty breathing during this 14-day period, avoid contact with others. Call your doctor or healthcare provider to tell them about your symptoms and your recent travel.
Although CDC reports that exposure risk for travelers who have connecting flights at airports in mainland China is low, UW recommends travelers reroute their trips to avoid transit through airports in mainland China (excluding Hong Kong).

**UW faculty, staff and students returning to the U.S. from China should contact the UW Employee Health Center** for consultation at emphlth@uw.edu. UW Medicine personnel should contact their Employee Health Services for further information, support and coordination (UWMC – Montlake at 206.598.4848, UWMC – Northwest at 206.668.1625, or Harborview Medical Center at 206.744.3081).

Additional information for travelers is available on this CDC webpage: [Travelers from China Arriving in the United States](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-health-advisories-from-china.html).

**I feel anxious about coronavirus. What can I do?**

We understand that some community members are concerned. Remember that according to our state and local health departments, the risk to the UW community is low. If you would like to talk with someone, support is available to students through campus mental health services:

- Bothell students: [Counseling Center](#)
- Seattle students: [Let’s Talk, the Counseling Center and Hall Health Mental Health](#)
- Tacoma students: [Counseling & Psychological Services](#)

You can prevent the spread of colds and other viral ailments by doing the following:

- Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and immediately dispose of the tissue.
- Wash your hands often and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched.

**Can you tell us more about the students who are being screened for coronavirus?**

For privacy reasons, the UW is not able to release information about students who are being monitored or tested for novel coronavirus, including their location. At this time, Public Health — Seattle & King County is in contact with the affected students and is closely monitoring the situation.

**What is the follow-up for household members of people being evaluated for novel coronavirus?**

Public Health – Seattle & King County makes contact with and monitors household members of individuals being tested, and takes actions to protect their health and the health of the community.
Where can I get more information about the novel coronavirus?

- For current information about this evolving public health situation, visit the CDC’s [2019 Novel Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) page.

- The Washington State Department of Health has established a call center to address questions from the public. If you have questions about what is happening in Washington state, how the virus is spread, and what to do if you have symptoms, please call 1-800-525-0127 and press #.

- For local information, visit the following online resources:
  - Public Health — Seattle & King County blog: [Why the current exposure risk is low from novel coronavirus](https://www pubblichealth.org/94175800/)
  - Questions and answers about a novel coronavirus in Washington:
    - Blog format and PDF format
    - [關於華盛頓新型冠狀病毒的問題和解答](https://www.puubblichealth.org/94175800/) (Chinese, Traditional)
    - [关于华盛顿新型冠状病毒的问题和解答](https://www.puubblichealth.org/94175800/) (Chinese, Simplified)
    - [Preguntas y respuestas sobre un nuevo coronavirus en Washington](https://www.puubblichealth.org/94175800/) (Spanish)
  - [Coronavirus, Travel and the Changing Situation](https://www.puubblichealth.org/94175800/)
  - Visit Tacoma-Pierce County Public Health Department’s [Human Coronaviruses](https://www.puubblichealth.org/94175800/) page