

Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

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As of 3 September 2020, there have been at least **26,112,402** total cases worldwide with **864,691** reported deaths; **79,646,008** total test results in the United States. A majority of countries or territories around the world and all 50 states in the U.S. have confirmed positive Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. On 30 January 2020, the WHO declared a global health emergency.

The WHO advised that if any traveler has symptoms suggestive of acute respiratory illness during their travel period or after returning, they should seek medical attention and highlight their recent travel to the medical personnel.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Considerations for Daily Life

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) published a [health resource page for daily life](#) and [tips if you decide to go out](#). These include resources for running errands, school and work, events and gatherings, travel, and transportation to help protect yourself, reduce exposure and limit community spread:

- Stay home if you are sick or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.
- Use a cloth face cover to cover your mouth and nose when around others in public. Continue to social distance.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.
- Practice social distancing. Social distancing means staying out of crowded places and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible.
- Try to visit stores during hours when fewer people will be there such as early morning or later in the evening.

- When getting gas use disinfecting wipes (if available) on handles and buttons and use hand sanitizer immediately after fueling.
- When using public transportation practice social distancing while waiting on platforms and when selecting where to stand or sit on the bus or train. Try to use touchless payment and no-touch trash cans and doors when available.
- While some [restaurant and bars](#) resume dine-in service consider making a reservation in order to avoid waiting in crowded lines. Always practice hand-washing hygiene before and after eating and drinking. When using public bathrooms, after washing hands, use a paper towel to touch the door handle when exiting.
- Try to avoid handling cash by using touchless payment or place payment on a receipt tray or the counter to avoid hand-to-hand contact, use hand sanitizer immediately after paying.

Travel Information for U.S. Citizens

On 6 August 2020, the [U.S. Department of State issued COVID-19 travel information](#) to advise U.S. citizens to review country-specific travel advisories.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Travel Health Notices

The CDC issued [information to consider before traveling during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) containing resources for travel within the United States, returning from international travel, travel health notices and cruise ship travel. These include taking the following steps to reduce exposure and limit person-to-person community spread:

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick or if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days and do not

travel with someone who is sick.

- Avoid touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after sneezing or coughing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Supplies of hand sanitizer, tissues, and other hygiene products may be limited, so consider bringing them with you.
- Older adults and people of any age with serious chronic medical conditions are at increased risk for severe disease.
- All international travelers must stay home for 14 days after returning from travel, monitor their health and practice social distancing. Social distancing means staying out of crowded places, avoiding group gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible.
- Use a [cloth face cover](#) to cover your mouth and nose when around others in public. Continue to social distance.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Additional destination travel health notices from the CDC may be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>.

What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

A new outbreak of pneumonia was first seen in early December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. On 7 January 2020, this outbreak was identified as being caused by novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). On 11 February 2020, the WHO announced an official name for the disease that is causing the coronavirus disease, COVID-19. Coronavirus refers to a family of respiratory viruses that can range from the common cold to a more severe disease, such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

The first Coronavirus was isolated in birds in 1937 and the first Human Coronavirus (HCoV) was identified in the nasal swab of patients with the common cold in the mid-1960s. Until now, seven strains of Coronavirus infecting humans have been identified. The newest strain, known as novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV), was identified in China on 7 January 2020.

Mode of Transmission

The virus is mainly zoonotic, which means that the disease normally exists amongst animals, but some of the viruses have the ability to spread to humans in what is known as a spillover event.

There is limited research on the exact mode of transmission of COVID-19, but the most likely route for a human-to-human transmission is via contact with an infected person's secretions.

Depending on the virulence of the Human Coronaviruses, the most common transmission from an infected person to others would be through the air (coughing and sneezing), close personal contact (touching or shaking hands), touching an object or surface that an infected person has touched and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands and, in some rare cases, via fecal contamination.

The novel Coronavirus was initially linked to the Wuhan food market, as many of the initial patients were customers of the market where a positive sample was isolated. However, despite the market being closed on 1 January 2020, there was still an increase in the number of cases, which suggests that person-to-person transmission is taking place.

Symptoms

The common Human Coronaviruses mainly present as mild to moderate upper respiratory tract illnesses similar to the common cold. Symptoms may include runny nose, cough, fever, sore throat, headache, loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath, and may progress to pneumonia or bronchitis with shortness of breath and easy fatigability.

Those at high risk of developing complications include those with underlying chronic conditions, such as respiratory and cardiac diseases, immunocompromised individuals, diabetics, as well as those in extreme age groups (e.g. infants or the elderly). In addition, pregnant women are also at higher risk if infected by COVID-19.

Diagnosis

There are several types of tests for this virus available. This would include serum PCR assay, nasal swab, broncho-alveolar lavage, sputum and sometimes stool samples.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment or vaccination for Coronaviruses and most mild cases are treated based on symptoms. Symptom relief may be achieved by taking pain and fever medication, using a room humidifier, drinking plenty of liquids and staying indoors as well as getting as much rest as possible.

If symptoms are more severe, please seek treatment from your healthcare provider.

All travelers who have returned from Wuhan after 1 December 2019 should seek treatment immediately if they: 1) have any respiratory symptoms or fever since their return; or 2) were in contact with any infected or unwell person during their travel.

Prevention

The WHO published [advice to help reduce the chances of being infected and prevent the spread of infection](#). These include:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based sanitizer if soap and water are unavailable.

- Cover mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing and follow with hand hygiene.
- Avoid crowded places especially within a closed and confined space. Avoid shaking hands and greet people with a wave instead.
- Thoroughly cook meats and eggs.
- Avoid eating raw meat, fish and eggs.
- Avoid unnecessary exposure to animals and avoid petting animals.
- Avoid contact with people suffering from acute respiratory illnesses.
- Stay home when you are having symptoms of upper respiratory tract infection.
- Drink plenty of water and keep well hydrated.
- Regularly clean and disinfect objects and surfaces touched by an infected person.
- Wear a face mask.

The above measures are effective against all infectious agents, including Influenza A and B (“the flu”), which sickens millions of individual worldwide and kills thousands each year.

Quarantine

The WHO published [considerations for quarantine of travelers](#) and the CDC issued a [health notice for travelers](#).

These include taking the following steps to reduce exposure and limit transmission:

- Travelers are required to be monitored for up to 14 days.
- Travelers should stay home and monitor their health within this 14-day period and a health official will contact you to give you additional instructions.
- Cover mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing by using disposable tissue and follow with hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and watch your health.
- If you develop a fever (100.4F/38C), cough or have difficulty breathing call your health department for advice before seeking care. If you can’t reach your health department, call ahead before going to a doctor’s office or emergency room.

The WHO has advised all worldwide healthcare personnel and airport security personnel to be extra vigilant and enact enhancement of surveillance at airports for early detection and prevention of spread of the disease.

Please visit the WHO website (www.who.int) for further information.

AIG Travel will continue to monitor the situation and provide periodic updates as needed.

Learn More

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Web: www.aig.com/travel

Sources:

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