



What Parents Need to Know About Coronavirus

What Is a Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a type of virus that usually cause mild respiratory symptoms similar to the common cold. However, strains such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) have caused severe illness and death.

The current coronavirus, 2019-nCoV, was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. It has since been found around the world, including in the U.S. in January 2020. As of February 3, there were three confirmed cases in Northern California (two in San Jose and one in San Benito County). As of yet, there have been NO reported cases in Mendocino County.

What Are the Symptoms?

Symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms range from mild to severe.

How Dangerous Is It?

The 2019-nCoV strain of the virus is new, so it is difficult to determine how virulent it is. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reported illnesses have ranged from infected people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying.

How is the Current Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Transmitted?

The coronavirus spreads among people who are within about 6 feet of one another. The virus is transmitted mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how the flu virus spreads. It is unclear whether the coronavirus can be picked up from surfaces.

Are Children Less Susceptible?

Early reports indicate that children may be less susceptible to the 2019-nCoV coronavirus than adults; however, everyone should do what they can to prevent the spread of the virus.

What Should Someone with Symptoms Do?

If you have been in Wuhan City, China in the last two weeks and show symptoms of fever, cough or difficulty breathing, follow these recommendations from the CDC:

- Seek medical care immediately. 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.
- Do 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 to avoid spreading the virus to others. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

How Can You Avoid Infection?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid exposure to the virus. Scientists are currently working on a vaccine for 2019-nCoV, but as of yet, there isn't one. In the meantime, here are ways the CDC recommends preventing the spread of coronavirus and other harmful viruses.

- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60 percent alcohol.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.