

Novel Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is happening?

There has been an outbreak of a new illness called “novel coronavirus.” While the illness started in China, the situation is quickly changing.

What do we know about novel coronavirus?

People with the virus have been confirmed in a number of countries including China, Vietnam and the United States. Since this virus is very new, health authorities are carefully watching the situation and how this virus spreads. This situation is quickly changing, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Prevention and Controls provides updated information as it becomes available.

What is County of Santa Cruz Public Health doing?

Public health officials are taking action to protect the public. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are closely monitoring the outbreak. This situation is quickly changing, and the CDC will provide updated information as it becomes available.

Is my family at risk of getting novel coronavirus?

At this time, there is low risk to Santa Cruz County residents, unless they recently traveled to Wuhan or were in close contact with someone who was ill who recently traveled in that area.

What should I do now to protect my family?

1. Get your flu shot to protect against flu or symptoms like the ones for the novel coronavirus.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water, rub for at least 20 seconds.
3. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, sleeve or arm. Do not use your hand.
4. Stay home if you are sick with a fever, cough, shortness of breath and are feeling tired.
5. Try staying away from large groups of people.
6. For people who are traveling to Wuhan: www.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/novel-coronavirus

Should we avoid going to public events?

Please remember that flu and other respiratory viruses are very common right now, and large group gatherings are places where viruses can spread. Remember, if you are not feeling well or are experiencing cold, flu or other symptoms, stay home to avoid spreading germs.

What happens if someone has traveled to China and they are now sick?

In the unusual event that a child or staff member is identified who recently traveled from Wuhan, China and has symptoms of respiratory illness, they should be sent home from school/work and the school should immediately contact Public Health.

What are symptoms of novel coronavirus?

Symptoms may include fever, fatigue, cough, runny nose or shortness of breath. Some people may have pneumonia or more serious illness.

I'm sick. How do I know if it is coronavirus or something else, like the flu?

If you have traveled to Wuhan, China in the last 14 days or have been in close contact with someone who has been there and have cold or flu symptoms, please contact your doctor.

How is novel coronavirus spread? Are my children and family at risk?

It is unclear how easily or frequently the virus may spread from person to person, so it's important to practice good hygiene (cover your cough and sneeze, and wash hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer). We are still learning about this new virus.

Should we cancel travel plans to Asian countries?

At this time, the CDC has issued a Level 3 travel advisory, recommending to avoid all nonessential travel to Wuhan, China. Please check the CDC website for current advisories to other countries: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/

I'm feeling stressed and overwhelmed, who can I talk to?

An anonymous crisis line is available 24 hours, 7 days a week including holidays at 1-800-704-0900 (Mental Health Services) and/or SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline 24 hours at 1-800-985-5990 or text TALKWITHUS to 66746 (Press 2 for Spanish).