



Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is novel coronavirus?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a type of virus that has only spread in people since December 2019. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new or “novel” virus and it can cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

How does coronavirus spread?

Health experts are still learning the details about how this new coronavirus spreads. Other coronaviruses spread from an infected person to others through:

- The air by coughing and sneezing.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.
- In rare cases, contact with feces.

What is happening internationally to prevent spread of novel coronavirus?

The World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners are working with Chinese authorities to learn more about the virus. This includes how it spreads, the populations most at risk, the types of clinical disease, and the best ways to detect and contain human-to-human spread.

What is happening in the United States to prevent spread of novel coronavirus?

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and US Customs & Immigration authorities have recently restricted flights to/from China to a few designated ports of entry. They are checking all passengers arriving from China for fever or other respiratory illness symptoms. As part of that program, federal authorities are now holding all passengers who have any symptoms at secure federal facilities.

For passengers without symptoms, CDC is instructing

those travelers to self-isolate at home for 14-days, and is providing their identities to their home state public health department.

What is the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) doing to prevent spread of novel coronavirus?

Oregon Health Authority and the 33 local public health authorities are watching for any signs the novel coronavirus has spread to Oregon.

When a traveler from China without symptoms leaves from a port-of-entry to a destination in Oregon OHA receives an up-to-the-minute update directly from the CDC. This information is then shared directly with local county health departments. The local public health authorities then monitor those people for 14 days, watching for any signs or symptoms of COVID-19.

What is Benton County Health Department doing to prevent spread of novel coronavirus?

Benton County’s Public Health Officer and communicable disease investigation team continues to closely monitor the evolving international novel coronavirus outbreak. Actions include:

- Contacting each of those arriving travelers.
- Assuring that they understand the 14-day home isolation instructions and what symptoms to watch for.
- Providing them with detailed information on actions to take in case they become ill.
- Monitoring them for symptoms.

These are the same as many emergency actions that the health department has trained for, practiced, and put into action in 2014 to monitor a number of area residents who worked in the Ebola fever treatment hospitals in East Africa.

Who is Benton County Health Department working with to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus?

Benton County Health Department continues to maintain regular communication with the following:

- Oregon Health Authority, Public Health Division
- Samaritan Health Services
- Samaritan Infectious Disease Clinic
- Oregon State University
- Corvallis and Albany Fire/EMS services
- Local school districts
- Benton County Sheriff's Office Emergency Services
- Municipal governments within the county
- Local medical clinics

How is Benton County Health Department working with Oregon State University?

The Health Department is in regular communication with Oregon State University with matters relating to any type of infectious disease.

Have there been people in Benton County identified to monitor for suspected novel coronavirus?

Yes, we have received names of people to monitor and are following the guidance from CDC outlined above.

How can we work to reduce stigma and misinformation about novel coronavirus?

Worldwide, domestically, and even locally, reports of discrimination and prejudice against Chinese citizens and people of Chinese ancestry are increasing daily. Infectious diseases are not linked to racial, ethnic, or

national identities and efforts should be made to avoid spreading stigma or fear based on nationality, race, or ethnicity.

What other information do I need to know?

Although this particular "novel" viral variant is new, coronaviruses as a group have been known to science since at least the 1930's and are recognized to cause 15-30% of all winter "common colds". As such, the actions to prevent infections with coronaviruses are well understood.

What additional steps can I take to prevent from getting novel coronavirus?

The steps you can take to prevent all respiratory viral infections, including those caused by coronavirus, are:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, particularly before eating and after being near someone who is ill.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose & mouth unless you have just washed your hands.
- Eat a healthy diet, stay hydrated, and get adequate rest.
- Avoid contact with those who are ill.
- If you do become ill, please protect others by staying home from work, school, and social settings until symptoms have stopped.

For more information, visit: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

To download the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) fact sheet in English, Spanish, or Arabic, please visit: <http://bit.ly/38Uy7Bm>