

VDH COVID-19 FAQs

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What are the most up-to-date and reliable sources of coronavirus information?

For those with access to the internet, the best sources of up-to-date information are the Virginia Department of Health website (<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus>) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>).

What are coronaviruses and the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can infect humans or animals. Sometimes an animal coronavirus can change so that it can infect people and become a human coronavirus. The current Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new coronavirus recently discovered in Wuhan, China that has not been previously found in people. Public health officials are trying to learn more about this new virus and the infection it causes.

What is the threat from COVID-19?

Although the potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 is high, both globally and to the United States, individual risk is dependent on exposure. For the general public in Virginia, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is low.

Who is at risk for getting the Novel Coronavirus infection?

Currently the risk to the general public in the United States is low. At this time, there are a small number of individual cases in the U.S. To minimize the risk of spread, health officials are working with healthcare providers to promptly identify and evaluate any suspected cases.

How do coronaviruses spread?

Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, close personal contact (such as caring for or living with an infected person), or touching an object or surface with the virus on it and then touching your mouth or eyes before washing your hands.

What are the symptoms of coronavirus infections?

Coronaviruses typically cause respiratory symptoms, such as runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, and fever. Sometimes, coronaviruses can cause more severe infections, such as pneumonia (infection of the lungs), kidney failure, or even death.

How soon after exposure do symptoms occur?

It depends on the type of coronavirus. In general, symptoms usually appear 2–14 days after exposure.

How are coronavirus infections diagnosed?

Special laboratory tests for respiratory or blood samples are needed to diagnose coronavirus infection. This testing is only performed on those with a travel history to China or close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with the Novel Coronavirus AND who have a fever and respiratory symptoms.

What should I do if I think I may be sick with coronavirus infection?

Contact your health care provider or local emergency health care facility. If you meet certain criteria for travel

and symptoms, you may need to be assessed more thoroughly. Call before going to an office, hospital or clinic, if possible. You may be asked to wear a mask at the facility.

Should I get tested for coronavirus?

If you think you need to be tested for coronavirus, you should call your healthcare provider. Do not go to your local health department for testing. Your healthcare provider will consult with the local health department to see if testing is necessary. Test kits are very limited and there are certain criteria set by the CDC that is issued to local health departments to determine who needs to be tested.

Where can I get tested for COVID-19?

You should call your health care provider if you think you need to be tested.

What is the treatment for coronaviruses?

There is no specific treatment for coronavirus infections. Treatment consists of supportive care and relief of symptoms.

Is drinking bleach an effective treatment for coronavirus?

No, it is not, and neither is any other heavy duty household cleaner. Please consult a licensed physician or other health care practitioner with treatment questions.

How can coronavirus infection be prevented?

A vaccine to prevent coronavirus infection is not currently available. People should follow these tips to help prevent respiratory illnesses of any kind:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and help young children do the same. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Wash your hands especially after coughing and sneezing, before and after caring for an ill person, and before preparing foods and before eating.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact (such as kissing, sharing cups, or sharing eating utensils) with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.
- Stay home when you are sick, except when you need to get medical care.
- Wash hands after animal contact and after visiting farms, markets, barns, petting zoos, and agricultural fairs.
- Avoid contact with animals who are sick.

Should I wear a facemask to prevent COVID-19?

Wearing a facemask is not recommended for people who are well to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. Only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected. The use of facemasks also is crucial for health workers and other people who are taking care of someone infected with COVID-19 in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

Can schools exclude students with recent travel from China but exhibit no symptoms?

No. Although these persons are asked to self-monitor and stay at home during the recommended 14 day observation period, these families are not legally obligated to stay at home.

Will schools be notified if students travel to China?

No. Travelers' names and information will not be released to schools. It is at the family's discretion to inform the school if their student has traveled or needs to stay at home.

Should students who have been advised to stay home after returning from China be granted an excused absence?

Yes. Schools should make every effort to help these students maintain their schoolwork. Schools should have applicable teachers provide assignments and study material electronically and allow students to complete work from home.

What if a student has traveled to China and while in school becomes sick with fever and respiratory symptoms?

If a student who has traveled in the last 14 days to China develops fever or respiratory symptoms while at school, the local health department should be notified, and a parent/guardian should pick up the student immediately. The student should wear a surgical mask (if possible) and be placed in a safe isolation area visible to the school nurse or other school health services staff and separate from the rest of the health room. Ideally, this would be a private room with the door closed and clear visibility.

If you become aware of a student who recently traveled to China and develops fever or respiratory illness, call your local health department and they can assist with determining what additional evaluation is needed.

One of our students is an exchange student from China. Can they return home to China?

Yes. There are no restrictions for students from China to return home.

Virginia-specific questions:**Has anyone in Virginia gotten infected?**

Currently, there are no confirmed cases in Virginia. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) investigates reports of suspect cases. The number of suspect cases (or Patients Under Investigation) in Virginia will be updated on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays on the Virginia Department of Health website. You can find this information at www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus.

What is VDH doing about COVID-19?

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation. VDH continues to provide updated information to our healthcare partners and the public as it becomes available. VDH communicates regularly with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and we are learning as much as we can about the situation. We will continue to work around the clock to protect the public from this emerging disease.

How is Virginia Preparing for COVID-19?

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is working closely with local, state and federal government partners, community partners as well as first responders, healthcare providers and emergency management partners, to respond to this public health threat.

VDH is also working to prepare state and local health departments, health care systems, businesses, schools, colleges and universities, and the general public in the event that widespread transmission of COVID-19 occurs.

I heard there was a case at [Name] University or Location.

Currently, there are no confirmed cases in Virginia. To protect patient confidentiality, VDH does not provide information about suspect cases or Persons Under Investigation.

Are people traveling from Wuhan to Virginia?

There are reports that China is not allowing anyone to travel into or out of Wuhan.

How is VDH protecting people who may have come in contact with a person infected with novel coronavirus?

As part of the public health investigation, VDH identifies and monitors close contacts who might have been exposed to the novel coronavirus. VDH works with these contacts to monitor them for symptoms and makes sure that they receive appropriate evaluation and care if they become ill.

Is VDH isolating sick people or quarantining people who have come in contact with sick people?

VDH advises Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) and people with confirmed infections who do not require hospital care to isolate themselves at home and follow specific instructions. Close contacts of PUIs should also monitor for symptoms, but are not required to stay home.

How likely is novel coronavirus to affect me?

Although the potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 is high, both globally and to the United States, individual risk is dependent on exposure. For the general public in Virginia, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-2019 is low.

Where should a healthcare provider call for guidance on a patient?

If a healthcare provider needs to consult VDH about a patient, they should contact their local health district at the phone number below. Local health district information can be found on the VDH website at

www.vdh.virginia.gov/local-health-districts/

Health District	Phone Number
Alexandria	(703) 746-4996
Alleghany	(540) 473-8240
Arlington	(703) 228-5580
Central Shenandoah	(540) 332-7830
Central Virginia	(434) 477-5900
Chesapeake	(757) 382-8600
Chesterfield	(804) 748-1743
Chickahominy	(804) 365-4313
Crater	(804) 863-1652
Cumberland Plateau	(276) 889-7621
Eastern Shore	(757) 787-5880
Fairfax	(703) 246-2411
Hampton	(757) 727-1140
Henrico	(804) 501-4522
Lenowisco	(276) 328-8000
Lord Fairfax	(540) 722-3470
Loudoun	(703) 777-0234
Mount Rogers	(276) 781-7450
New River	(540) 585-3300
Norfolk	(757) 683-2796
Peninsula	(757) 594-7300
Piedmont	(434) 392-3984

Pittsylvania/Danville	(434) 766-9828
Portsmouth	(757) 393-8585
Prince William	(703) 792-6301
Rappahanock	(540) 899-4797
Rappahanock-Rapidan	(540) 347-6363
Richmond	(804) 205-3500
Roanoke	(540) 283-5050
Southside	(434) 738-6815
Thomas Jefferson	(434) 972-6261
Three Rivers	(804) 758-2381
Virginia Beach	(757) 518-2700
West Piedmont	(276) 638-2311
Western Tidewater	(757) 514-4700

MORE INFORMATION/CONCERNS:

- If you have concerns about coronaviruses, contact your healthcare provider.
- **Virginia** is providing all the latest information on its website at www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus.
- **Nationwide** information is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention webpage www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.