



School Nurse and Administrator Resources for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Background

As you may know, China is experiencing an expanding outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a new coronavirus (COVID-19). This virus emerged in Hubei Province, China in December 2019. The virus is spreading from person-to-person, and cases have been detected in several countries internationally and the United States.

Currently, the immediate risk to the general public in Nevada and the United States is low. There is no evidence that COVID-19 is spreading in Nevada.

As new information emerges, please remind your community that the risk of novel coronavirus is not at all connected with race, ethnicity or nationality. Stigma will not help to fight the illness. Sharing accurate information during a time of heightened concern is one of the best things we can do to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. They usually cause mild respiratory illnesses, such as the common cold. Some coronaviruses have caused more severe illness, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that had not been seen in humans before December 2019.

Who is at risk for COVID-19?

At this time, most people in Nevada are **not** considered at risk for COVID-19 infection and do **not** need to seek medical evaluation for the virus.

How is the novel coronavirus infection spread?

Experts believe that the COVID-19 primarily spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Droplets from a cough or sneeze can travel up to about six feet. Another person can become infected if these droplets enter their mouth, nose, or eyes directly or through their contaminated hands. An infected person who coughs or sneezes into their hands and touches surfaces such as phones, tables, door handles, or toys can contaminate them. While some coronaviruses can be spread to others through contaminated surfaces, coronaviruses generally do not survive on surfaces for a prolonged period of time. It takes 2 to 14 days after a person gets the virus in their body to become ill.

What should I do if I suspect a student, staff member, or volunteer is at risk for COVID-19?

If a student, staff member, or volunteer meets the above criteria, it is important to place them in a private room away from others and ask them to wear a facemask. Immediately notify your local health department. They will provide you with guidance. In the case of students, immediately notify their parents/guardians/emergency family contact and work with the family to develop a plan to continue the student's educational program while they are away from school.

Who should seek medical evaluation for COVID-19?

Students, staff, and volunteers who are:

- Ill with a fever, cough, or experiencing difficulty breathing AND have traveled from China in the last 14 days
- OR
- Ill with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing AND have been identified by healthcare provider as a recent close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case or had recent close contact with someone who is being evaluated for COVID-19 infection.

Should all children returning from China stay home from school for 14 days?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that all travelers from China (including school students, staff and volunteers) arriving in the U.S. **AFTER** February 2, 2020 at 2 p.m. stay at home, away from others, and monitor their health for 14 days. This measure was put in place because of the increasing number of cases of COVID-19 in China.

There is no recommendation for people without symptoms arriving before this time to restrict their activities. All travelers from China arriving **BEFORE** February 2, 2020 at 2 p.m. can continue to attend school and should take the following steps:

- Watch for any changes in your health for 14 days after leaving China.
- If you get a fever or develop a cough or difficulty breathing during this 14-day period, avoid contact with others. Call your doctor or healthcare provider to tell them about your symptoms and your recent travel.

What can I do to prevent COVID-19 infections in my school?

Schools do **not** need to take any special precautions beyond what is normally recommended to prevent the spread of germs in schools. You can help students and staff reduce their risk for getting and spreading viral respiratory infections, including the flu and the common cold, by following the simple steps below. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash hands.

In addition, it is recommended that schools follow their regular cleaning and disinfection program.

- Disinfecting is the responsibility of school custodial staff. They are trained to use disinfectants in a safe and effective manner and to clean up potentially infectious materials and body fluid spills – blood, vomit, feces, and urine. Contact your custodian, school nurse, or school administrative staff if students are ill and your classroom needs cleaning and disinfection.
- On a daily basis, clean hard surfaces (desks, tables, countertops, sinks) and clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (door handles, faucets, railings), bathrooms, and rooms where healthcare services may be provided. Use alcohol wipes to clean keyboards.
- Clean surfaces with fragrance-free soap. Thorough cleaning with soap and water will remove most microorganisms.
- Use [EPA-safe disinfectants](#) registered for influenza on hard surfaces. Clean the surface first to remove all organic matter. Apply the proper concentration of disinfectant and allow the required wet contact time. Pay close attention to hazard warnings and instructions for using personal protective items, such as gloves and eye protection. Use disinfectants in a sufficiently ventilated space.

Where can I turn for more information?

- [Nevada's Response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#)
- [2019 Novel Coronavirus, Wuhan, China \(CDC\)](#)
- [Guidance for Travelers \(CDC\)](#)

Public Health Agencies in Nevada:

- Nevada Division of Public & Behavioral Health: (775) 684-5911 (M-F 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM), (775) 400-0333 (after hours).
- In Clark County, contact the Southern Nevada Health District: (702) 759-1300 (24 hours).
- In Washoe County, contact Washoe County Health District: (775) 328-2447 (24 hours).
- In Carson City and Douglas, Lyon, and Storey Counties, contact Carson City Health and Human Services: (775) 887-2190 (24 hours).

As with any newly emerging infectious disease, knowledge evolves with time. Early on, it is difficult to know the ways in which the disease spreads, how effectively it spreads from person to person, and how severe the infection is. We will continue to update the [Novel Coronavirus Outbreak website](#) as more information becomes available.