Coronavirus (COVID-19) – General Information for Desoto, Manatee and Sarasota Counties

Updated: March 2, 2020

WHAT IS NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19, 2019-nCoV)?

The virus was first detected in Wuhan, China, and is currently known as “novel coronavirus” (COVID-19), meaning it is a strain of virus not previously seen in humans. This virus presents as an upper respiratory illness with symptoms similar to the common flu and is spreading person-to-person. The virus has caused death, but cases have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness depending on a variety of factors that are not yet fully known.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF NOVEL CORONAVIRUS 2019, AND WHO IS AT RISK?

Current symptoms reported for patients with the virus have included:

- Runny nose
- Headache
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Fever
- A general feeling of being unwell

The CDC believes individuals may begin to experience the symptoms of the virus 2-14 days after exposure.

For more detailed information, visit the CDC website: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html

WHERE HAVE THERE BEEN CONFIRMED CASES?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring the outbreak of the respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and which continues to expand. On February 11, 2020, the World Health
Organization named the disease coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated COVID-19. COVID-19 illnesses, most of them associated with travel from Wuhan, also are being reported in a growing number of international locations, including the United States. Person-to-person spread of COVID-19 also has been seen among close contacts of returned travelers from Wuhan, but at this time, this virus is NOT currently spreading in a community in the United States.

HOW IS CORONAVIRUS TRANSMITTED?

Person-to-person transmission is thought to be the route which mainly spreads this respiratory illness via droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features associated with 2019-nCoV and investigations are ongoing. While CDC considers this is a very serious public health threat, based on current information, the immediate health risk from 2019-nCoV to the general American public is considered low at this time.

HOW CAN I HELP PROTECT MYSELF?

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

CAN I TRAVEL TO CHINA?

CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to China in response to the coronavirus respiratory illness outbreak. Chinese officials have closed transport within and out of Wuhan and other cities in Hubei province, including buses, subways, trains, and the international airport. Additional restrictions and cancellations of events may occur. There is limited access to adequate medical care in affected areas.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAD CLOSE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS THE VIRUS?

What if I recently traveled to Wuhan, China or came in contact with an individual who had been exposed, and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing? Individuals should seek medical care
right away. Before going to a doctor’s office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel or contact with someone and your symptoms. Avoid contact with others.

IS THERE A VACCINE?

Currently, there is no vaccine available to protect against COVID-19, but one is being worked on.

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT PETS OR OTHER ANIMALS AND COVID-19?

While this virus seems to have emerged from an animal source, it is now spreading from person-to-person. CDC recommends that people traveling to China avoid animals both live and dead, but there is no reason to think that any animals or pets in the United States might be a source of infection with this new coronavirus.

Additional Information:

CDC Information and factsheets on the coronavirus in various languages, can be found below:


Fact sheets in various languages: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html

  At the bottom of this pages are “what to do” and What not to do” in multiple languages.

World Health Organization: