Health Services: Novel Coronavirus in Wuhan, China

What is the Novel Coronavirus in Wuhan, China?
There have been recent reports of a new (novel) strain of a coronavirus which is causing an outbreak of severe pneumonia illness in the city of Wuhan, Hubel Province, China, throughout China and throughout the world. This outbreak began in early December, 2019 and continues to expand in scope and magnitude. There have been thousands of new cases in China and clear evidence of human-to-human transmission in several countries including the United States. The World Health Organization declared on Thursday, January 30 that this has now become a global health emergency as the outbreak has spread well beyond China. Global surveillance is being done and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) is closely monitoring this situation.

How is this virus spread?
This Novel Coronavirus is similar to other viruses such as MERS and SARs, all of which have their origin in bats. The sequence of the illness suggests that this recent virus is spread through an animal reservoir. Early on many of the patients in the outbreak had a link to a large seafood and live animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. Later, a growing number of patients have reported the same illness but did not have exposure to animal markets confirming a person-to-person spread in the community.

What are the symptoms of the virus?
The symptoms include:
- Fever AND symptoms of lower respiratory illness (cough, shortness of breath) AND in the last 14 days before symptom onset history of travel from Wuhan City, China
- Close contact with a person who is under surveillance for the virus or close contact with a person who has a confirmed case.

If you are a student, staff or faculty who has recently been to China or who has possibly come in contact with an infected individual AND you exhibit the symptoms, please go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department.

Prevention
The best prevention for any communicable disease are simple but important measures to practice as part of your daily routine:

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds or more with soap and water,
- Avoid sharing anything that has come into contact with saliva,
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Throw the tissue away and do not reuse it!
- Get adequate sleep and eat a well-balanced diet to ensure a healthy immune system.

Situation in the U.S.A.

The CDC is continually and carefully monitoring the situation. Currently there have been several people with imported cases in the United States. There was one case noted of a person-to-person spread with this virus in the United States. While this is a serious health threat, for the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus, the immediate health risk is considered low.

Health Services and Administration throughout the College will continue to work closely with the New Jersey Department of Health to prepare for, screen and prevent the spread of illness and to keep our community safe. If the situation warrants, we will follow up with additional information.
What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?
Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?
COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example health care workers and close contacts of people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

How does COVID-19 spread?
The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It’s important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it’s unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of
• fever
• cough
• shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?
Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?
The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include
• Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
• Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should
• 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.

What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?
If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should seek medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don’t go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?
There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Is there a treatment?
There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.
What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

People: As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Animals: Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. See COVID-19 and Animals for more information.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider’s office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider’s office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider’s office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department. Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

Discontinuing home isolation

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19