



Public Health Division

County of Santa Cruz

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Press Release

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Santa Cruz County Public Health Closely Monitors Novel Coronavirus Outbreak

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CA – Santa Cruz County Public Health officials are closely working with California Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Bay Area health officials to monitor the novel (new) coronavirus, which originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. To date, there are no cases reported in Santa Cruz County.

As of January 26, 2020, five cases have been confirmed in the United States in four states - Arizona, California, Illinois and Washington. Two of those cases have been identified in California. All have traveled from Wuhan, China. Cases have also been confirmed in several countries. The CDC is monitoring for illness among travelers arriving from China at 20 U.S airports.

“We are monitoring the situation closely to protect the health of Santa Cruz County residents and limit the spread of this virus,” said Dr. Gail Newel, Santa Cruz County Health Officer. “The potential for a disease outbreak is always a public health concern. We are working with health care providers and community partners to review emergency procedures and we are prepared to take action should someone in our county becomes ill with this new virus.”

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that are common among animals and humans. In rare cases, animal coronaviruses can be transmitted to humans. This newly discovered coronavirus (2019-nCov) has not been previously detected in animals or humans. The source of 2019-nCov is not yet known. Person-to-person spread of 2019-nCov is currently occurring.

While this is considered a serious public health threat, based on current information, the risk to the general public in Santa Cruz County is considered low at this time. However, it is likely there will be more cases reported in the U.S. in the coming days and weeks.

Symptoms of Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Typically, human coronaviruses cause mild-to-moderate respiratory illness. Symptoms are very similar to the flu, including runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, fever, and/or shortness of breath. Older adults and people with underlying health conditions may be at increased risk for severe disease.

Anyone who has recently traveled from China, or came in close contact with someone who traveled from China, and develops a fever and lower respiratory symptoms, such as a cough or shortness of breath within 14 days after leaving the area, should first call their doctor or health care provider and share travel history and symptoms before visiting the clinic or emergency room.

Travel Health Notice for China

CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to China. Chinese health officials have reported thousands of cases in China with severe illness, including over a hundred deaths.

Tips to Protect Yourself and Others

No additional precautions are recommended at this time beyond the simple daily precautions that everyone should always take, such as:

1. Washing hands with liquid soap and water, and rubbing for at least 20 seconds;
2. Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing; and
3. Staying home if you are sick.

Since flu activity will continue to remain high during this flu season, and symptoms of coronavirus are similar to the flu, Santa Cruz County Public Health also recommends getting a flu shot to protect yourself and others from the flu.

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, and the information contained in this press release may change quickly. CDC will provide updated information as it becomes available.

For the latest updates, go to the CDC 2019 Novel Coronavirus website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

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