



Joint News Release
January 30, 2020

2019 Novel Coronavirus: Updates, Multi-agency Efforts, and Patient/Provider Information

Although no cases of the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) have been reported in Guam or the Mariana Islands to date, the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS), along with emergency management stakeholders, is actively preparing for its potential arrival. DPHSS continues to follow guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as it prepares its response, updating any plans or procedures as CDC guidelines change.

As of January 27, 2020, CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to China.

Multi-agency Efforts:

On January 29, 2020 DPHSS met with key external stakeholders to establish consensus on best practices to keep 2019-nCoV off Guam and to discuss the emergency protocols in the event that a patient tests positive on island. Attendance at the meeting included: Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services, Guam Fire Department, Customs and Quarantine Agency, Guam International Airport Authority, Guam Memorial Hospital Authority, Guam Visitors Bureau, Guam Regional Medical City, Transportation Security Administration, Guam Homeland Security/Office of Civil Defense (GHS/OCD), Guam Hotel and Restaurant Association, and airline representatives. Efforts are also being communicated with the Guam Department of Education.

DPHSS and CDC partners are also visiting healthcare facilities throughout the island to educate providers on the signs and symptoms of 2019-nCoV to immediately identify suspect cases, i.e. Patients Under Investigation (PUI). News releases will be issued jointly by DPHSS, the Governor's Office, and GHS/OCD.

Signs and Symptoms:

For confirmed 2019-nCoV infections, reported illnesses have ranged from people being mildly sick to people being severely ill and dying. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath

CDC believes at this time that symptoms of 2019-nCoV may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of MERS viruses.

If you were in China in the last 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should:

- Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and inform them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Do not travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wear a facemask when you are in the same room with other people and when you visit a healthcare provider. If you cannot wear a facemask, the people who live with you should wear one while they are in the same room with you.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to avoid spreading the virus to others. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

It is important to note that individuals displaying symptoms of 2019-nCoV or those who test positive will not be deported from Guam.

For Healthcare Professionals:

Healthcare providers should immediately notify both infection control personnel at their facility and the Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services in the event of a Patient Under Investigation (PUI). DPHSS can be reached 24/7 at (671) 888-9276. DPHSS staff will advise professionals on how to send in samples to the CDC for testing.

An individual should be considered a PUI if they:

1. have a fever or symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing) AND
2. have traveled to China within the last 14 days or have come into close contact with someone who has.

No vaccine or specific treatment for 2019-nCoV infection is available; care is supportive.

What you can do to avoid infection:

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an 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.

It is currently flu and respiratory disease season and CDC recommends getting vaccinated and taking flu antivirals if prescribed.

Stay Up to Date with Reputable Sources:

The community is reminded to only share official notices and visit the following link for the most up-to-date information:

- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>

For more information, contact DPHSS Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., at (671) 635-7447.

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