

BACKGROUND

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common throughout the world. They can make people and animals, such as camels, cats and bats, sick. These viruses, at times, can evolve and infect people, then spread through human to human contact. Human coronaviruses spread just like the flu or a cold—through the air by coughing or sneezing; through close personal contact, like touching or shaking hands; by touching an object or surface with the viruses on it; and occasionally, through fecal contamination. This has occurred previously with the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreaks.

WHO DOES THE ISSUE IMPACT?

People most at-risk to contracting a coronavirus are those who have traveled to places where the virus is occurring. In the case of the novel coronavirus, that location is the Wuhan area of China.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The department frequently exercises and prepares for a potential infectious disease outbreak. We have been monitoring the coronavirus outbreak in China using information from our federal and local partners and are preparing our response teams in case of an outbreak here. We have talked with clinicians about the potential spread of the coronavirus into the United States and specifically, Pennsylvania, and also on how to ship lab specimens of potential coronavirus cases.



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Symptoms of human coronaviruses are often like the common cold.
 - Runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, fever, a general feeling of not being well.
- These symptoms are typically mild to more severe, and only last for a few days.
- Human coronaviruses can sometimes cause lower-respiratory tract infections, such as pneumonia or bronchitis.
 - This is more common in people with heart disease, people with weakened immune systems, infants and older adults.
 - This particular coronavirus appears to be significantly more severe for older adults.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Cover** any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, do not use your hands!
- **Clean** surfaces frequently, such as countertops, light switches, cell phones and other frequently touched areas.
- **Contain**- if you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, visit <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

The latest information on the coronavirus in the U.S. and worldwide can be found on the [CDC website](#)

Additional information from the CDC on what to do if you are sick can be found [here](#)

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