

CDC Daily Key Points
Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) Outbreak
February 24, 2020

All content updated since February 21 is shown in colored text.

MAIN KEY POINTS

- There is an expanding [global](#) outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus.
- This virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2;” the disease it causes has been named COVID-19.
 - Due to potential for confusion with SARS-CoV, where possible, public communications will use “the virus that causes COVID-19.”
- While most COVID-19 cases outside of China have been associated with travel to or from China, [community spread is being detected in a growing number of countries.](#)
- Destinations with apparent community spread of COVID-19 include Hong Kong, [Iran, Italy,](#) Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand.
- [The fact that COVID-19 has caused illness, including illness resulting in death, and sustained person-to-person spread is concerning. These factors meet two of the criteria of a pandemic.](#)
- [As community spread is detected in more and more countries, the world moves closer toward meeting the third criteria, worldwide spread of the new virus.](#)
- [The potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 is high, both globally and to the United States.](#)
- [But individual risk is dependent on exposure.](#)
- [For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is low.](#)
- [Under current circumstances, certain people will have an increased risk of infection. For example, healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19 and other close contacts of persons with COVID-19. CDC has developed guidance to help in the risk assessment and management of people with potential exposures to COVID-19.](#)
- [However, it’s important to note that current global circumstances suggest it is likely that this virus will cause a pandemic. In that case, risk assessment would be different.](#)
- [Global efforts at this time are focused concurrently on containing spread of this virus and mitigating the impact of this virus.](#)
- [The federal government is working closely with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners, as well as public health partners, to respond to this public health threat.](#)
- [The public health response is multi-layered, with the goal of detecting and minimizing introductions of this virus in the United States so as to reduce the spread and the impact of this virus.](#)
- [CDC is operationalizing all of its pandemic preparedness and response plans, working on multiple fronts to meet these goals, including specific measures to prepare communities to respond local transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19.](#)
- [Pandemic guidance](#) developed in anticipation of an influenza pandemic is being repurposed and adapted for a COVID-19 pandemic.
- Public health partners are encouraged to review their pandemic preparedness plans at this time.

- At this time, there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 and no medications approved to treat it.
- [Nonpharmaceutical interventions](#) would be the most important response strategy.
- CDC launched a new weekly email newsletter with updates on the agency's COVID-19 outbreak response. [Sign up for the newsletter.](#)

SITUATION UPDATE

- To date, [35](#) international locations (including the U.S.) have reported confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- More than 77,000 cases have been confirmed on mainland China, with more than 2,500 deaths.
- On February 22, 2020, CDC issued a Level 2 Travel Notice (Practice Enhanced Precautions) for [Japan](#) and [South Korea](#).
- On February 23, 2020 CDC issued Level 1 Travel Alert Notices (Practice Usual Precautions) for [Iran](#) and [Italy](#).
- CDC also recommends that all travelers reconsider cruise ship voyages into or within Asia at this time.
- This is consistent with [guidance by the U.S. State Department](#).
- For the latest travel guidance, visit [COVID-19 Information for Travel](#).
- This is a rapidly evolving situation. CDC is constantly reviewing and updating its guidance as needed.
- CDC is reporting confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States in two categories:
 1. Cases detected through our domestic public health systems, and
 2. Cases among people who were repatriated via U.S. State Department flights from Wuhan, China and from the Diamond Princess cruise ship (Japan).
- [Fourteen](#) cases of COVID-19 have been detected in California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Washington, and Wisconsin through U.S. public health surveillance.
- Two of these cases occurred through person-to-person spread. The remaining cases all were in persons who had travel to China.
- [39 cases of COVID-19 have been detected among the 1,100+ people repatriated from Hubei Province, China and the Diamond Princess. \(That includes 3 people repatriated from Wuhan and 36 people who were repatriated from the Diamond Princess.\)](#)
- Almost all of the people from the Wuhan flights who were quarantined have finished their 14-day quarantine period.
- Because the passengers on the Diamond Princess were in a close setting where there was significant spread of COVID-19, they are considered at high-risk for infection. CDC expects to see additional confirmed cases of among those passengers.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- While the immediate risk of this new virus to the American public is believed to be low at this time, everyone can do their part to help us respond to this emerging public health threat:
 - It's currently flu and respiratory disease season and CDC recommends getting a flu vaccine, taking everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of germs, and taking flu antivirals if prescribed.

- If you are a healthcare provider, be on the look-out for people with who recently traveled from China and fever and respiratory symptoms.
- If you are a healthcare provider caring for a COVID-19 patient or a public health responder, please take care of yourself and follow recommended infection control procedures.
- If you have been in China or have been exposed to someone sick with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, you will face some limitations on your movement and activity. Please follow instructions during this time. Your cooperation is integral to the ongoing public health response to try to slow spread of this virus. If you develop COVID-19 symptoms, contact your healthcare provider, and tell them about your symptoms and your travel or exposure to a COVID-19 patient.
- For people who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 who develop symptoms, contact your healthcare provider, and tell them about your symptoms and your exposure to a COVID-19 patient.
- For people who are ill with COVID-19, please follow CDC guidance on how to reduce the risk of spreading your illness to others. This guidance in on the CDC website.

TESTING

- All testing for COVID-19 continues to be performed at CDC. At this time, all positive results from testing conducted in non-CDC, U.S. laboratories must be confirmed at CDC.
- CDC is remanufacturing test kits, which will be distributed following rigorous quality control processes.

REPATRIATED FLIGHTS & QUARANTINE ORDERS

- CDC has supported the Department of State in the safe and expedient ordered departure of U.S. citizens and residents affected by outbreaks of COVID-19.
 - Five chartered flights returned passengers from Wuhan City, China.
 - Most recently, passengers from a cruise ship docked in Japan were repatriated. (See section: *Diamond Princess*)
- The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Secretary, under statutory authority, issued federal quarantine orders to all such passengers entering the United States.
- Almost all of the people from the Wuhan flights who were quarantined fulfilled their 14-day quarantine period and been released.
 - On February 12, 195 people from the first chartered flight were discharged from quarantine.
 - On February 18, 347 people who were under federal quarantine were released.
 - On February 20, 263 people who were under federal quarantine were released.
- People released from quarantine pose no health risk to their communities.

DIAMOND PRINCESS

- On February 16, 329 American citizens returned by flights chartered by the State Department.
- [Persons who are not sick are being kept in quarantine.](#)
- [Persons who are sick with COVID-19 are in isolation and receiving medical care as needed.](#)

- All American passengers have disembarked from the *Diamond Princess* cruise ship. These people have been placed under travel restrictions, as have the ship's other passengers and crew.
- Some American crew members of the *Diamond Princess* remain aboard the ship.
- More than 60 Americans who were on board the *Diamond Princess* remain in Japan, hospitalized with COVID-2, including some who are reportedly severely ill.
- The U.S. Government is taking measures to protect the health of the people under quarantine, their loved ones, and their communities, as well as the communities where they are being temporarily housed.
- Based on what is known about this virus and other coronaviruses, CDC believes the risk to the communities temporarily housing these people is low.

WESTERDAM

- No testing of passengers from the *Westerdam* Cruise Ship for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, has been done at CDC.
- CDC is aware that an American passenger on the *Westerdam* tested positive for infection with SARS-CoV-2 in Malaysia and that two subsequent and sequential tests on samples from that same person were negative.
- CDC is aware that follow-up testing among more than 1,500 passengers from the *Westerdam* has all been negative.
- CDC considers passengers from the *Westerdam* to be at "low risk" of SARS-CoV-2 infection during the 14 days after their last exposure per the agency's [Risk Assessment guidance](#).
- Given this level of risk, testing of *Westerdam* passengers for SARS-CoV-2 is not recommended unless additional exposures are identified to warrant testing.

CDC ACTIONS

- CDC is aggressively responding to the global outbreak of COVID-19 and preparing for the potential of community spread in the United States.
- **Preparing first responders, healthcare providers, and health systems:**
 - Establishing **visibility across healthcare systems** to understand healthcare use, particularly surges in demand for medical care and associated resources.
 - Conducting **extensive outreach to clinical and hospital professional organizations** to ensure health system **preparedness**.
 - Producing more than **23 guidance documents** on infection control, hospital preparedness assessments, personal protective equipment (PPE) supply planning, and clinical evaluation and management (as of February 22, 2020).
 - Working closely with healthcare facilities and providers to **reinforce infection control principles** that recognize PPE is one component of a larger set of practices that help to limit the spread of disease.
 - **Developing a range of respirator conservation strategies**, including strategies to make supplies last longer (such as using alternative products like reusable respirators) and extending the use of disposable respirators.
 - Leveraging existing **telehealth tools** to direct people to the right level of healthcare for their medical needs.

- **Working with supply chain partners** to understand supply usage, what products are available, and when more aggressive measures may need to be taken to ensure that healthcare workers at highest risk have access to PPE.
- **Sharing information with stakeholders** to help them recognize when to shift the strategies they are using.
- **Reinforcing state, territorial, and local public health readiness:**
 - **Assessing state and local readiness** to implement community mitigation measures like home containment, including housing and transportation needs.
 - Coordinating with states to **identify and mitigate gaps in readiness** that will help reduce the spread of disease in the community while protecting workers, infrastructure, and institutions.
 - Linking public health agencies and healthcare systems to **identify and mitigate stressors to the health system**
 - **Tracking stockpiles of PPE** across jurisdictions.
 - Working with state and local public health to **use existing Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) funding** to support COVID-19 preparedness and response activities.
 - Leveraging funding mechanisms to help states **accelerate preparedness activities**.
 - Providing **technical assistance and guidance** to states to improve their ability to respond to the outbreak.
- **Supporting communities, businesses, and schools:**
 - **Creating business guidance** to help the public and private sectors ensure they are able to operate with adaptations like telework and flexible sick leave policies, as well as how to respond if an employee gets sick.
 - **Developing guidance for childcare programs, K-12 schools, and colleges/universities** to help them plan and prepare for COVID-19 and respond if there is a local outbreak in their community.
 - Providing **planning guides for COVID-19** that households, community- and faith-based organizations, event planners of mass gatherings, and public health communicators can use.
 - Educating communities about **nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPIs)** that help slow the spread of illness, like COVID-19.

For more information, please visit the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outbreak Page at: www.cdc.gov/COVID19.