



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT CORONAVIRUS Q&A



CORONAVIRUS 2019-nCoV



In a recent poll, two-thirds of Americans say they feel a “real threat” from the novel coronavirus. Although reports of the novel coronavirus, or 2019-nCoV, fill the news, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) stresses that the risk to the American public is low. Here is the latest on 2019-nCoV, including some answers to common questions about coronavirus.

There are 12 confirmed cases of coronavirus in the U.S. Six of these cases are in California – two in Southern California and four in Northern California.

There are more suspected cases being tested for the 2019-nCoV locally, but keep in mind that the majority of tests performed by the CDC are negative. In California, the percentage of suspected cases testing negative is 93%.

QUESTION: SHOULD I BUY A FACE MASK?

According to Christopher O’Brien, Chief of Infectious Disease at Kaiser Permanente, coronavirus should not be a buzzword to go and buy a mask.

Dr. O’Brien does not see the reason for wearing masks and warns against running out and purchasing.

But can a mask help protect you? The experts say no. There is no evidence that suggests face masks will benefit the general population. The CDC recommends face masks only for those who have symptoms of coronavirus or health providers.

For the best prevention, follow these everyday actions:

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands with soap and water frequently for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water is not available, opt for an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces you use often, such as your phone and computer.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

QUESTION: CAN I TRAVEL?

The CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to China.



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QUESTION: IS THERE A VACCINE FOR CORONAVIRUS?

Don't believe the scam emails going around: there currently is no vaccine for the 2019-nCoV.

There is no specific treatment for the virus. Diagnostic testing is conducted only at the CDC labs or labs designated by the CDC as qualified.

UMR says that supportive care for affected individuals may include hydration, supplemental oxygen or mechanical ventilation for severe illness. Diagnostic testing and supportive care will be covered per your health benefits plan.

Consult with your doctor if you have any respiratory symptoms, such as:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Breathing difficulties

QUESTION: IS IT SAFE TO RECEIVE MAIL AND PACKAGES FROM CHINA OR STATES WHERE 2019-nCoV HAS BEEN CONFIRMED?

The World Health Organization says yes, it is safe. People receiving packages are not at risk for contracting 2019-nCoV. This type of virus is unable to survive on objects, like letters or envelopes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

As with any public health issue, VEBA carriers continue to monitor the situation and follow all guidance and protocols issued by the CDC, state and local public health departments.

To learn more about 2019-nCoV, visit credible websites such as the CDC (www.cdc.gov), World Health Organization (www.who.int) or California Department of Public Health (www.cdph.ca.gov). Contact your doctor's office with individual health-related questions.