

2019 Novel Coronavirus (nCoV) FAQs

What are Coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses common in both humans and animals. These viruses usually cause mild to moderate respiratory illnesses. The source of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is suspected to be animals sold at an open-air market, in Wuhan, China; the virus is possibly a previously unrecognized bat coronavirus. It appears to cause a more severe illness progressing to pneumonia.

The outbreak in Wuhan, China is a rapidly evolving situation. More is being learned about this new virus every day and updates are available on the CDC website.

What are the symptoms of Coronavirus infection?

Common human coronaviruses usually cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illnesses, like the common cold. Zoonotic coronaviruses (e.g., MERS-CoV, and SARS-CoV, which originate from bats) can cause more severe illness that often progresses to pneumonia. These coronaviruses are associated with high mortality rates.

CDC Criteria for evaluating patients in the United States for 2019-nCoV include:

Clinical Features		&	Epidemiology Risk
1.	Fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing)	AND	In the last 14 days before symptom onset, a history of travel from Wuhan City, China. –OR– Close contact with a person who is under investigation for 2019-nCoV while that person was ill.
2.	Fever or symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing)	AND	In the last 14 days, close contact with an ill laboratory-confirmed 2019-nCoV patient.

How is the 2019-nCoV diagnosed?

Patients meeting one of the two above criteria should be isolated and tested.

Contact the Infection Control Office immediately if a patient meets either of those criteria. Infection Control staff will assist with coordination of testing, notifying the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) and provide guidance on care and disposition of the patient.

Samples to be collected are:

- 2 nasopharyngeal viral swabs (separate collection vial);
1 for routine respiratory virus testing and 1 for coronavirus
- oropharyngeal (throat) viral swab (separate collection vial)
- sputum (BAL, tracheal aspirate or sputum)
- blood in 1 serum separator (gold top) tube
- Additional specimens may be necessary if the patient is a NY, MA, or RI resident.

Order:

1. Miscellaneous test for 2019 Novel Coronavirus.
The laboratory (virology/microbiology) will send the specimens to the CDC for testing until the CT DPH can institute on-site testing.
2. Respiratory Virus PCR Panel on nasopharyngeal swab for other common viruses. **Note:** a positive test does not exclude co-infection.

These specimens are to be hand carried to the lab.

Off-site specimen collections will be coordinated with CT DPH.

Note: The coronavirus testing performed at local laboratories does NOT identify the outbreak strain of coronavirus. The local labs cannot identify coronaviruses of zoonotic origins.

How can I protect myself in caring for these patients?

If a patient screens positive for respiratory symptoms and travel, immediately request that the patient dons a mask and, then isolate the patient as soon as possible. Place the patient in a negative pressure, airborne infection isolation room (AIIR). If an AIIR is not available, place the patient in a private room, keep the patient masked and the door closed.

Patient care should be provided using airborne and contact precautions. Staff are to wear a gown, gloves, N95 respirator (or PAPR) and eye protection. In clinic areas where an N95 or PAPR is not available, use a barrier mask and eye protections. As with other infections, careful hand hygiene is essential.

What additional measures should be taken?

This is a newly identified virus; we need to be extra cautious in precautions until we know more about this virus.

- As above, institute airborne and contact precautions, plus use eye protection.
- Use strict hand hygiene practices.
- Use disposable patient equipment whenever possible.
- Disinfect reusable medical equipment with the hospital approved disinfectant wipes.
- Limit movement of the patient outside the patient's room.

- Perform tests in the patient's room, using portable equipment and medical supplies, if possible, or postponed until the patient is no longer infectious. If the patient must be transported to another department, contact the receiving department and notify the staff of the precautions needed.
- Limit staff and visitors. Maintain a list of all persons entering the patient's room.

What should I do if I develop symptoms after caring for a patient with 2019-nCoV?

- Stay home! Do **NOT** report to work.
- Notify the occupational health office or department
- If you require medical care, present at the Emergency Department where you will be evaluated in a negative pressure isolation room. Call ahead and notify the Emergency Department you are coming in to be evaluated for 2019-novel coronavirus. Don a mask and perform hand hygiene immediately upon arrival to the Emergency Department and inform them you have been exposed to 2019-nCoV.

How do I contact the infection control office?

Via intranet/internet: *Insert website here*

Telephone: (###) ###-####