

2019-nCoV for Providers and Healthcare Facilities

This FAQ has information on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, or 2019-nCoV, the new respiratory virus that was identified in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in late 2019. As the situation is rapidly evolving, providers are encouraged to check the DPH 2019-nCoV provider [webpage](#) for current information.

1. What are the typical symptoms of 2019-nCoV?

Current symptoms reported for patients with 2019-nCoV are fever and mild to severe lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, chest pain). The mortality rate currently associated with the virus is about 5%, mostly affecting older patients with underlying illnesses. Disease onset is believed to be between 2 to 14 days after exposure.

2. How is the virus transmitted?

As with other coronaviruses, it is likely that 2019-nCoV transmission can occur through the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose, and eye. Spread of previous coronaviruses generally occurred between close contacts.

3. When should masks be recommended for patients?

During influenza season, regardless of which viruses are circulating, it is a best practice that symptomatic people be offered a mask in the waiting room. Any patient with respiratory symptoms and/or fever should be in an individual room during screening assessment.

4. How can I stay up to date with local information about 2019-nCoV?

All health care providers in LA County are encouraged to join the Los Angeles Health Alert Network (LAHAN) to receive important notifications regarding 2019-nCoV. To join LAHAN, visit publichealth.lacounty.gov/lahan or text the word 'LAHAN' to 66866. In addition, visit the DPH 2019-nCoV provider [webpage](#) for the most up-to-date versions of checklists, forms, and other resources.

AIRPORT SCREENING

5. What screening is being conducted at the airport?

CDC staff is screening all incoming travelers from China at multiple airports across the US, including LAX. All travelers who meet the criteria are being referred to healthcare facilities for 2019-nCoV testing. Travelers who are asymptomatic are being issued an information card to bring to healthcare providers in case they need medical assistance. **If you have a sick patient with fever, respiratory symptoms, and this [card](#), immediately call Public Health at 213-240-7941 during business hours or 213-974-1234 after hours.**



To the left: Image of informational card given to asymptomatic travelers at LAX.

HOSPITAL SCREENING & HOSPITALIZATION

6. What screening questions should be asked during intake of ill respiratory patients at healthcare systems?

Obtain a detailed travel history for any patients being evaluated with fever and acute respiratory illness. If the patient meets the CDC case definition for Person Under Investigation (PUI) for 2019-nCoV (see [nCoV Checklist](#) for current PUI definition):

- Initiate infection control measures
- Review and follow the [nCoV Checklist](#)
- Immediately notify LAC DPH at 213-240-7941 during business hours or 213-974-1234 after hours.



Key Points

- All travelers who are asymptomatic are being issued an information card to bring to a healthcare provider (HCP) in case they need medical assistance.
- Health care providers should obtain a detailed travel history for any patients being evaluated with fever and acute respiratory illness.
- **DO NOT TURN DOWN ANY PATIENT**

For more information:

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/nCorona2019.htm

California Department of Public Health
www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

The Los Angeles Health Alert Network (LAHAN) informs clinicians of local outbreaks and emerging health risks, including 2019-nCoV. To sign up, visit: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/lahan or text LAHAN to 66866

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7. What infection control measures should be used?

Persons under investigation (PUIs) should be asked to wear a surgical mask **as soon as they are identified**. Patients should be placed in a private room with the door closed for evaluation, ideally an airborne infection isolation room, if available. Healthcare personnel entering the room should use standard precautions, contact precautions, airborne precautions, and use eye protection (e.g., goggles or a face shield).

8. What are the environmental cleaning recommendations?

Coronaviruses are inactivated by EPA-registered hospital disinfectants if used correctly. Use EPA-registered hospital disinfectants as recommended by their instructions for use (IFUs), paying attention to the wet contact time required. Staff disinfecting surfaces or isolation rooms should wear PPE required for 2019-nCoV.

9. What if a patient with suspected 2019-nCoV does not need to be hospitalized, can they be discharged?

Do not discharge patient without prior approval from LAC DPH. To evaluate whether a suspected 2019-nCoV case may be discharged, the LAC DPH health officer will need information such as:

- Do they have a local address to be discharged to?
- Are family and friends traveling with the patient?
- Does the patient have travel plans already set-up? If so, when and to where?

10. What is the guidance for the management of friends or family members traveling with the person under investigation for 2019-nCoV?

Friends or family members traveling with the PUI should be assessed immediately for any symptoms of illness from 2019-nCoV (e.g. fever, lower respiratory symptoms). Collect the following information of friends and family members:

- Names.
- Contact information of these individuals.
- Name and address of local hotel or lodging.
- If the person under investigation tests positive for 2019-nCoV, the LAC DPH will follow-up with all people who may have had contact with the patient.

GUIDANCE FOR PROVIDERS NOT IN ACUTE CARE HOSPITALS

11. What types of healthcare facilities should be vigilant for new cases of 2019-nCoV?

Any facility that might have a patient self-present for care should be vigilant for 2019-nCoV. This includes urgent care facilities, outpatient clinics, minute clinics, etc. At this time, it is unlikely that skilled nursing facilities, long-term acute care hospitals or psychiatric facilities would encounter a patient infected with 2019-nCoV.

12. What should a provider at an outpatient/ambulatory facility or clinic do if a patient presents with possible 2019-nCoV infection?

Outpatient providers should follow the same initial steps as hospitals. If the patient meets the CDC case definition for Person Under Investigation (PUI) for 2019-nCoV (see [nCoV Checklist](#) for current PUI definition):

- Initiate infection control measures
- Review and follow the [nCoV Checklist](#)
- If patient meets criteria for PUI, immediately notify LAC DPH at 213-240-7941 during business hours or 213-974-1234 after hours.

13. What precautions should EMS workers use when evaluating or transporting a patient under investigation for 2019-nCoV?

EMS workers should follow the same guidelines for personal protective equipment as other healthcare workers.

14. How should healthcare facilities handle healthcare workers returning from countries experiencing broad transmission of 2019-nCoV?

There is no standard guidance currently on this issue, and each situation should be evaluated on a case by case basis in consultation with LAC DPH (call 213-240-7941 during business hours or 213-974-1234 after hours).

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