

# HEALTH ADVISORY



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## **REGION IV PUBLIC HEALTH**

Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum  
counties and Cowlitz Tribe

**To: Physicians and other health care providers**

**Please distribute a copy of this information to each provider in your organization.**

Questions regarding this information may be directed to the following Region IV health officers:

**Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH**

Clark County Public Health, 564.397.8412  
Skamania County Community Health, 509.427.3850  
Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, 360.414.5599  
Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, 360.795.6207

**Steven Krager, MD, MPH**

Clark County Public Health, 564.397.8412  
Skamania County Community Health, 509.427.3850  
Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, 360.414.5599  
Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, 360.795.6207

### **Alert categories:**

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.

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*Requested action*

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- Be aware that 2019-nCoV has been confirmed in a traveler who recently returned to Snohomish County from Wuhan, China.
- Perform travel screening at registration with a focus on recent travel to China and for patients with fever and acute lower respiratory illness.
- 2019-nCoV should be suspected in patients who present with:
  - fever **AND** symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing) **AND** in the 14 days before symptom onset:
    - have a history of travel from Wuhan City, China **OR**
    - had close contact with a **person who is under investigation** for 2019-nCoV while that person was ill.
  - fever **OR** symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing) **AND** in the 14 days before symptom onset had close contact with an **ill lab-confirmed** 2019-nCoV patient.
- Implement appropriate infection prevention and control measures (see next section).
- Immediately notify **your local health department** (see county-specific contact information below) in the event of a suspected case of 2019-nCoV. **You must get approval from your local health department for testing through Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).**

*Infection prevention and control recommendations*

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- Provide surgical masks for all patients entering your facility who present with respiratory symptoms (coughing, difficulty breathing). Patients with suspected 2019-nCoV infection need to be immediately placed in a private room with the door closed; ideally an airborne infection isolation room with negative pressure, if available.
  - If your facility does not have an airborne infection isolation room with negative air pressure, place the patient in an exam/procedure room that has a portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. If no portable HEPA filter is available, ensure that the patient wears a surgical mask and place the patient in an exam/procedure room with the door closed.
  - The room will need to remain empty for at least one hour after the patient vacates the room and be terminally cleaned before placed back in use.

- All health care personnel entering the exam/procedure room should use standard precautions, contact precautions (gown, gloves), airborne precautions (gown, gloves, N95 mask or PAPR) and eye protection (face shield or goggles).
- Exam/procedure room cleaning: routine cleaning of high-touch surfaces is standard.
- Immediately notify infection prevention personnel at your health care facility.

### ***Specimen collection***

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- Testing for other respiratory pathogens by the provider should be done as part of the initial evaluation and should not delay specimen shipping to CDC.
- If testing is approved by your local health department for 2019-nCov, collect specimens as soon as possible regardless of time of symptom onset. Maintain proper infection control when collecting specimens.

Collect ALL of the following specimens and store refrigerated:

- Lower respiratory specimen (ex. sputum, BAL), stored in a sterile, leak-proof, screw top container.
  - Nasopharyngeal (NP) and oropharyngeal (OP) swab, collected using synthetic fiber swab with plastic shafts and stored in 1-3 ml of viral transport medium.
  - Serum, 5-10 mL of whole blood collected in serum separator tube.
  - Urine, at least 50 mL stored in a sterile container.
  - Stool, stored in a sterile container.
- Detailed CDC guidance for collection, handling, and testing of clinical specimens is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>.

### ***Background***

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The CDC is closely monitoring an outbreak caused by a novel (new) coronavirus in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Chinese authorities first identified the new coronavirus, which has resulted in more than 200 confirmed human infections in China with three deaths reported. A number of countries, including the United States, are actively screening incoming travelers from Wuhan. Exported cases have been confirmed in neighboring countries and in a traveler who returned to Snohomish County from Wuhan last week.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread between people, such as has been seen with MERS and SARS. Past MERS and SARS outbreaks have been complex, requiring comprehensive public health responses.

Many of the patients in the outbreak in Wuhan, China have reported some link to a large seafood and animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. However, a growing number

of patients reportedly have not had exposure to animal markets, suggesting person-to-person spread is occurring.

Based on current information, the immediate health risk from 2019-nCoV to the general American public is deemed to be low at this time.

***Additional resources***

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- Information for Healthcare Professionals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidance-hcp.html>
- Interim Guidance for Preventing Transmission in Homes and Communities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/guidance-prevent-spread.html>
- Guidance for Travelers: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/novel-coronavirus-china>

**Thank you for your partnership.**

<b>Local health jurisdiction</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fax</b>
Clark County Public Health	564.397.8182	564.397.8080
Cowlitz County Health Department	360.414.5599	360.425.7531
Skamania County Community Health	509.427.3850	509.427.0188
Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services	360.795.6207	360.795.6143

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