



DPH Information Regarding 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

With recent cases of 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) reported in several countries including the U.S., Delaware health officials are increasing monitoring efforts to identify potential cases. The Division of Public Health (DPH) has posted information on its website <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph> and is issuing this statement to provide details about its activities related to the outbreak.

While the available information suggests a low immediate health risk for the general public, we consider any new infectious disease a serious concern and are working with health care providers to promptly identify and evaluate any suspected cases. It is important to recognize that the current investigation and response are dynamic, and new information about the disease may impact the approach to this disease. DPH will keep you updated as the situation evolves.

Here is what you need to know about 2019-nCoV for your Early Learning Center:
Currently the risk to the general public is considered low. At this time, there are a small number of individual cases in the U.S. and none in Delaware, though we know that could change at any time. Risk is based on exposure. As you know we are in the heart of flu and respiratory disease season, and with over two-thousand cases statewide, most of the population is at greater risk of contracting seasonal influenza than coronavirus. Those staff or children/students with recent travel to any area of China or contact with someone who has recent travel and is ill, have an increased risk for becoming ill. DPH is currently not recommending exclusion from work/school of asymptomatic persons arriving from China, but early learning centers should consider their own policies and procedures in making a determination on exclusion.

For staff and children/students without an associated travel risk, it should not be assumed that most respiratory illnesses are coronavirus. Symptoms of coronavirus are most similar to lower respiratory infections with patients having fever, cough, and shortness of breath. While in some cases illnesses can be severe and require hospitalization, many individuals infected with 2019-nCoV recover by resting, drinking plenty of liquids and taking pain, and fever-reducing medications.

Any administration or health care staff with questions can call the DPH Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology 24/7 at **1-888-295-5156**. Ill children who report symptoms consistent with 2019-nCoV and have associated travel risk or close contact with someone who does, should be taken to a private room (three walls and a door) with the door closed, until the child's parents can be contacted. Health care personnel entering the room should use standard infectious disease control precautions. Specific guidance regarding infectious disease control in childcare facilities can be found at <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dph/chca/files/childcaremanual.pdf>.



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When a new disease is circulating, it's natural for people to ask what they can do to protect themselves and their families. The best guidance at this point is to advise patients to take the same precautions recommended for avoiding colds and flu:

- staff and students should stay home when they are sick;
- teach students to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues, or to cough or sneeze into their inner elbow;
- practice good hand washing with soap and water as often as possible, and if soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers;
- encourage flu vaccination among both staff and students;
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in classrooms.

Parents and staff who have concerns about their, or their child's exposure risks should contact their health care provider. DPH is holding frequent internal calls to ensure a constant flow of communication, and we are developing materials such as flyers to help the public understand what this virus is, and what they can do to protect themselves. Feel free to post the [attached flyer](#) around your school so that everyone learns more about this virus and how they can prevent the spread of germs and infection overall.