



## To Our Iranian American Community,

The Society of Iranian American Health Professionals (SIAHP), takes the health and safety of our members and community a priority task. We know there are growing concerns around coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and we are closely following the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and World Health Organization (WHO) for updates.

Mortality rate estimates for the coronavirus are often cited as about 2%, though estimates have ranged from 1.4% to 3.4%. In comparison, the mortality rate for severe seasonal influenza is much lower, at 0.1%. As you know, Iran has currently become one of the global epicenter of the coronavirus with the highest mortality rate in the world. Based on official numbers, the mortality rate in Iran has fluctuated daily, between 8-18%, compared to 2.5-3% in China and less everywhere else.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). However, NIAID together with Moderna Therapeutics are working on a vaccine that will start its human clinical trials in April 2020. Currently, the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. As a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of any respiratory diseases (including regular cold and flu), including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick or coughing
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and [people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

Click here for more detailed information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>



## **What to Do If You Are or Suspecting to be Sick With Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)? Coughing & Fever?**

Currently, your odds are far greater that your cough, fever or cold symptoms are caused by influenza or another respiratory disease.

Contact a healthcare professional if you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact 6 feet (2 meters) with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently traveled to an area (ie: China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, and Japan) with ongoing spread. Tell your healthcare professional about your recent travel or contact. Your healthcare professional will work with your state's public health department and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19. Also do the following:

- **Stay home except to get medical care**
- **Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home**
- **Call ahead before visiting your doctor**
- **Wear a facemask**
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes**
- **Clean your hands often**
- **Avoid sharing personal household items**
- **Clean all "high-touch" surfaces everyday**
- **Monitor your symptoms**
- **Discontinuing home isolation**
- **Do not shake hands, hug or kiss anyone**

Click here for more detailed information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>

## **How and when should I get tested?**

The only patients getting tested are people who have traveled to countries with large outbreaks and those admitted to the hospital with severe illness and no known cause. That may change as the disease becomes more common and testing becomes more available, he says. Currently, the best strategy is to get an influenza test, which is widely available, to rule out other causes of illness. Contact a health professional and discuss your travel history and symptoms. They will contact CDC and will decide if you need to be tested and will guide you



## What Happens to Travelers from China and Iran Arriving in the United States?

To slow the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) into the United States, CDC has worked with public health partners and has implemented new travel procedures announced in a [Presidential Proclamation on Novel Coronavirus](#)<sup>external icon</sup>. In summary:

1. Foreign nationals who have visited China and Iran in the past 14 days may not enter the United States.
2. American citizens, lawful permanent residents, and their families who have been in China and Iran in the past 14 days will be allowed to enter the United States from 20 designated airports to undergo health screening. Depending on their health and travel history, they will have some level of restrictions on their movements for 14 days from the time they left China or Iran.

If you are in the second group above and are traveling to the United States:

- Your travel will be redirected to one of 20 U.S. airports where CDC has quarantine stations.
- You will be asked about your health and travel.
- Your health will be screened for fever, cough, or trouble breathing.

Depending on your health and travel history:

- You will have some restrictions on your movement for a period of 14 days from the time you left China and Iran.

These actions are being taken to protect your health, the health of other travelers and the health of U.S. communities from the new coronavirus that is spreading from person-to-person in parts of China and Iran.

**Note: There is a travel ban to and from Iran. CDC and WH have not updated their websites to include Iran yet. However, the same China restrictions (even more strict) applies to travelers from Iran.**

Click here for more detailed information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/from-china.html>



## **Which Are the Designated Airports with CDC Quarantined Stations and Additional Screening?**

1. Los Angeles International
2. John F. Kennedy International
3. O'Hare International
4. San Francisco International
5. Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson
6. Anchorage Ted Stevens International
7. Boston Logan International
8. Dallas-Fort Worth International
9. Detroit Metropolitan
10. El Paso International
11. Honolulu International
12. Houston George Bush International
13. Miami International
14. Minneapolis-St. Paul International
15. Newark Liberty International
16. Philadelphia International
17. Puerto Rico's San Juan International
18. San Diego International
19. Seattle-Tacoma International
20. Washington Dulles International

## **Should I Worry and Panic?**

Public health experts say the threat of a coronavirus outbreak shouldn't feel like a death sentence. Though it poses a serious risk for some—namely older individuals and those with underlying health conditions—for the majority it will likely be a relatively mild illness.

## Are Pregnant Women and Children More Susceptible?

Currently, there is no information from published scientific reports about susceptibility of pregnant women to COVID-19. Pregnant women experience immunologic and physiologic changes which might make them more susceptible to viral respiratory infections, including COVID-19. Experts say pregnant women fall into the vulnerable category of people more likely to get seriously ill with the new virus. Though the precautions are the same, pregnant women need to be especially vigilant. Avoid large public gatherings if you're in an area with new coronavirus cases. Make sure you have an influenza shot if you're pregnant and reach out to your doctor to see if they have contingency plans if new coronavirus cases escalate, such as conducting a virtual visit through telemedicine when possible.

There is no evidence that children are more susceptible to COVID-19. In fact, most confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported from China have occurred in adults. Infections in children have been reported, including in very young children. Children who have gotten the virus have had milder disease, she says, and there have been no reported deaths in children under age 9. Still, children may play a role in transmission of the virus so they should follow the same restrictions to prevent passing it on to others. And keep your kids out of school and away from others if they are infected.

Click here for more detailed information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnant-women.html>

## If My Child or Anyone in My Household is Coughing or Has a Fever, Do I Need to Keep Them Home? For How Long?

Absolutely. This is not the time to give your child some Tylenol and send them off to school. Be prepared with alternative plans to be able to keep them at home. The younger the child the less capable they are of keeping their own secretions and snot to themselves, so parents have to be mindful of that. In general, for any illness, children should be home until there is no sign of infection, which is when their symptoms have resolved, and they are fever-free without any medications for at least 24 hours.

## **Are There Any Precautions or Steps Different in Coronavirus Prevention than in Influenza Prevention? What About Treatment? What about taking zinc or other medicines as a preventive measure?**

Both illnesses are infectious respiratory illnesses caused by different viruses but spread the same way. They are transmitted through droplets from a sick person sneezing or coughing or talking within 2 meters or 6 feet. If such a droplet enters your eyes, mouth or nose, you could become infected.

There is some concern that the new coronavirus can also be transmitted by tiny fine droplets that remain suspended in the area after an ill person leaves.

Antibiotics don't work for either virus. The symptoms of both viruses can be treated by over-the-counter medications like Advil or Tylenol. There are no antivirals or vaccines currently for the new coronavirus. The flu has both a vaccine and antivirals, which can lessen the duration.

Public health experts say there is no known substance we can take to decrease our chances of contracting the new coronavirus. The best prevention is washing your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds and staying home when you're sick for at least 14 days.

## **How Long Do Coronavirus Germs Live on Surfaces?**

It really depends on the surface. If it's a surface exposed to sunlight outside, it likely only lives for a few minutes or up to an hour. But if it's indoors and a dry environment, germs can live up to a day or two.

## **Do Allergy and Asthma Sufferers Have a Higher Rate of Illness Contraction?**

There is no evidence that allergy sufferers have a higher rate of getting coronavirus but asthma sufferers do. The groups with the highest risk of fatalities are the elderly and those with diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, including respiratory illnesses, and smokers, according to a new study.



## **How Does the Mortality Rate of the New Coronavirus Compare to the Flu?**

Mortality rate estimates for the new coronavirus are often cited as about 2%, though estimates have ranged from 1.4% to 3.4%. In comparison, the mortality rate for severe seasonal influenza is much lower, at 0.1%.

But once the number of asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic cases is known the real fatality rate for new coronavirus may be less than 1%, says Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, in a New England Journal of Medicine article published recently.

The numbers fluctuate depending on the number of confirmed cases and deaths, which changes daily. So the exact rate won't be known until experts know the true denominator, which is the total number of people infected, including those who are asymptomatic or never got tested.

## **How Do I Distinguish Coronavirus from the Flu or Common Cold? When Should I Go to the Hospital?**

It is impossible to do based on symptoms alone. The main symptoms of the new coronavirus are fever, cough, shortness of breath, and general fatigue and muscle aches. These overlap with the symptoms of the flu or any other respiratory virus. The only way to know for sure is to get tested by a doctor. Experts recommend calling your doctor ahead of time as they may recommend a virtual visit first or take specific precautions if you go to the office to prevent potential exposure to others.

You should only go to a hospital if you are guided to do so by your doctor that has been in contact with CDC or if you are sick enough that you think you should be admitted. The sign is difficulty breathing or shortness of breath combined with a high fever of 101 or higher.

## Should I Buy a Masks or Gloves?

Not unless you or someone in your household is sick with a cold, flu or the new coronavirus. There is no evidence that masks help if you're healthy. While the N95 masks used in hospital settings can be effective, experts say they need to be fitted for the individual. That occurs for health care workers in hospitals but not when people buy such masks online or over-the-counter.

You could consider wearing a mask, if you're sick or in close contact with an ill child or loved one.

Gloves also are only useful if you're taking care of an ill child or loved one and are in contact with bodily fluids. So, wear gloves if you're changing an ill child's diaper or cleaning up vomit. But wearing them on a day-to-day basis for prevention is not helpful as we touch our hands, eyes, and mouth frequently.

## Do I Need to Buy Specific Cleaning Products?

Regular household disinfectant wipes and cleaners should suffice. Anything with alcohol or bleach works. If someone at home is sick the CDC recommends cleaning surfaces that are touched frequently—like doorknobs and countertops—every day.

**We are so grateful for you and your shared efforts to keep yourself and our community safe!**

**With Sincere Adoration and Care,**

**SIAHP Board Members**

### References:

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