

Pharmacy Services Team Update

Coronavirus/COVID - 19

BACKGROUND

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that exist amongst humans and animals. Four of these viruses commonly infect humans around the world, whereas three of these viruses have evolved from infecting animals to humans, including:

- SARS-CoV: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus
- MERS-COV: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus
- COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019

The COVID-19 is a new strain of respiratory Coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province of China in December of 2019. There is currently no vaccine to prevent infection. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure and include runny nose, sore throat, fever, cough and shortness of breath. According to the World Health Organization, "More rarely, the disease can be fatal. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as, diabetes and heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus."

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

As of February 22, 2020 the virus has spread and there are over 30 locations globally with confirmed cases. The Centers for Disease Control has determined the general risk to the American public is low, as they are unlikely to be exposed to the virus, however more cases and person to person spread are likely to occur. In the United States, there have been 35 coronavirus cases across 8 states including: California, Washington, Arizona, Texas, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Illinois and Massachusetts. The infected individuals had either returned from Wuhan, China or been in contact with someone who had returned from that area. There have been two cases of human-to-human transmission confirmed in the United States. The best plan of action for prevention is to avoid travel if possible to Wuhan, China and take standard preventive actions to avoid the spread of respiratory viruses, such as:

- Avoiding contact with individuals who are sick or stay home if you are sick
- Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Cover your cough or sneeze and wash your hands with soap and water
- Disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

For the most up to date information on this emerging virus, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>.

