



**NEWS RELEASE**

**For Release: Feb. 26, 2020**

**OKC-County Health Department**

**LToya Knighten**

[lknighten@occhd.org](mailto:lknighten@occhd.org)

**405-215-2265**

## **COVID-19: Oklahoma City-County Health Preparedness**

(Oklahoma City) – The Oklahoma City-County Health Department (OCCHD) Emergency Preparedness Program has emergency preparedness plans in place if needed to respond to any activity related to COVID-19.

“In the winter of 2002, OCCHD established the Emergency Preparedness and Response program which has developed plans to prepare for, mitigate and respond to incidents such as emerging infectious diseases (i.e. H1N1, COVID-19) and pandemics,” said OCCHD Emergency Preparedness Administrator Blaine Bolding.

“We have experience in dealing with past emerging infectious disease outbreaks and are ready to help protect the public should a COVID-19 outbreak occur in Oklahoma County,” Bolding added.

Any emergency preparedness activities that would be activated to respond to COVID-19 in Oklahoma County would include municipal governments and all local school districts.

“Oklahoma City Public Schools (OKCPS) has a strong partnership with the Oklahoma City County Health Department (OCCHD),” said OKCPS Emergency Manager Brandi Farris.

“In the event of a public health situation, OKCPS follows OCCHD’s emergency preparedness plan and looks to them for guidance,” she added. “The district would be a small part of a larger plan executed in a public health emergency,” Farris said.

OCCHD encourages all Oklahoma County residents to stay informed and look for information from credible resources such as OCCHD, the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) and/or the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

**-more-**

Oklahoma County residents who think they or a family member might be at risk, or are having symptoms, should seek medical care right away. **Before going to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and discuss symptoms.**

###

### **Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as of 2/26/2020*

**Q: Why is the disease causing the outbreak now being called coronavirus disease 2019, COVID-19?**

**A: On February 11, 2020 the World Health Organization [announced](#) an official name for the disease that is causing the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak, first identified in Wuhan China. The new name of this disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as "2019 novel coronavirus" or "2019-nCoV."**

**Q: What is a novel coronavirus?**

A novel coronavirus (CoV) is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified.

**Q: What is the source of COVID-19?**

A: Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people, and others, such as canine and feline coronaviruses, only infect animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses that infect animals have emerged to infect people and can spread between people. This is suspected to have occurred for the virus that causes COVID-19.

**Q: What are the symptoms and complications that COVID-19 can cause?**

A: Current symptoms reported for patients with COVID-19 have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever<sup>1</sup>, cough, and difficulty breathing. Read about [COVID-19 Symptoms](#).

**Q: How does the virus causing Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19), spread?**

A: This virus was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The first infections were linked to a live animal market, but the virus is now spreading from person-to-person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some viruses are highly contagious (like measles), while other viruses are less so. Currently, it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the [spread of newly emerged coronaviruses](#).

**Q: What is CDC doing about COVID-19?**

A: This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation and CDC will continue to provide updated information as it becomes available. CDC works 24/7 to protect people's health. More information about [CDC's response to COVID-19](#) is available online.

**Q: How can I help protect myself?**

A: Visit the [COVID-19 Prevention and Treatment](#) page to learn about how to protect yourself from respiratory illnesses, like COVID-19.

**Q: Is there a vaccine?**

A: Currently, there is no vaccine available to protect against COVID-19.

**Q: What are the treatments?**

A: There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms.

Learn about [COVID-19 Treatment](#).

**Q: How do you test a person for COVID-19?**

A: At this time, diagnostic testing for COVID-19 can be conducted only at CDC.

For more information on specimen collection see [CDC Information for Laboratories](#).

**Q: What should healthcare providers and health departments do?**

A: For recommendations and guidance on the patients under investigation, infection control, including personal protective equipment guidance; home care and isolation; and case investigation, see [Information for Healthcare Professionals](#). For information on specimen collection and shipment, see [Information for Laboratories](#).

**Q: Is the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 the same as the MERS-CoV or SARS-CoV virus?**

A: No. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some coronaviruses cause cold-like illnesses in people. Others cause illness in certain types of animals, such as cattle, camels and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can spread to people. This happened with SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV. The virus that causes COVID-19 likely also originated in an animal and spread to humans. The coronavirus most similar to the virus causing COVID-19 is SARS-CoV. There are ongoing investigations to learn more. The situation is changing, and information will be updated as it becomes available.

**Q: Should I be concerned about pets or other animals and COVID-19?**

A: While this virus seems to have emerged from an animal source, it is now spreading from person-to-person in China. There is no reason to think that any animals including pets in the United States might be a source of infection with this new coronavirus. To date, CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19. At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals including pets can be infected with or spread COVID-19.

**Q: What about animals or animal products imported from China pose?**

CDC does not have any evidence to suggest that animals or animal products imported from China pose a risk for spreading COVID-19 in the United States. This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available. The [United States Department of Agriculture regulates](#) the importation of animals and animal products, and [CDC regulates](#) the importation of animals and animal products capable of spreading human disease.