

Umair A. Shah, M.D., M.P.H.
Executive Director
2223 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77027
Tel. (713) 439-6000
Fax: (713) 439-6080



Harris County
Public Health
Building a Healthy Community

Dana Wiltz-Beckham, DVM,
MPH, MBA
Director, Office of Science,
Surveillance & Technology
2223 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77027
Tel. (713) 439-6160
Fax: (713) 439-6306

February 7, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

As you may be aware from recent news, a novel (new) coronavirus (nCoV) was recently detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and is causing an outbreak of respiratory illness. Although there have been confirmed cases of nCoV within the U.S, there are no confirmed cases in Texas to date.

We continue to learn more about nCoV and based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the immediate health risk from novel coronavirus is considered low for Harris County residents (and the US) at this time. The CDC, along with the World Health Organization (WHO), are closely monitoring the outbreak and taking proactive measures to prevent further spread of this virus.

Currently there are no confirmed cases of novel coronavirus in Harris County. Harris County Public Health (HCPH) is working closely with the CDC and other national partners, Texas Department of State Health Services, and local and regional partners to monitor the developing outbreak and will promptly report any confirmed cases in our jurisdiction. The guidance also recommends that anyone who has had close contact with a confirmed nCoV patient or has recently traveled and returned from China within 14 days of feeling sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing should seek medical care.

While there are currently no confirmed cases of novel coronavirus in our area, it is the season for flu and other common respiratory illnesses. Similar to influenza and other respiratory pathogens, nCoV is believed to spread mainly through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. You and your children can help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses with these actions:

- Everyone six months and older is encouraged to get a flu shot.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- 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.

For the latest information on novel coronavirus including symptoms, transmission, and evaluation recommendations, please visit Harris County Public Health's website at: www.hcphtx.org/nCOV or call us at 713-439-6000. You can also visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> for the CDC's latest updates.

Sincerely,

Blythe Mansfield, MD, MPH, MS, FACOEM
Infectious Disease Physician, Surveillance & Epidemiology Unit

HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.

Follow HCPH on Twitter [@hcphtx](https://twitter.com/hcphtx) and like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/hcphtx)