

Frequently Asked Questions About Coronavirus/COVID-19

Current as of March 4, 2020

Q: What is COVID-19?

A: COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus – also called the 2019 novel coronavirus. This new virus was unknown to humans before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

Q: What if COVID-19 eventually spreads here in San Diego?

A: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has guidelines for schools to prepare for pandemic flu, which district officials are abiding by as they are very similar to preparation for COVID-19.

Parents should make sure their emails and telephone numbers are up to date in your district's database/Student Information System to make sure you receive any new information or urgent notices.

Q: What are San Diego County schools doing about it?

A: San Diego County schools continues to follow CDC guidance, as well as the guidance from public health departments at the State and County levels to keep student and staff populations safe and healthy. We will follow all directives from these agencies to reduce exposure in school. It is the public health department that decides on quarantines, school closures, and exclusion policy, not the school district.

Please Note: staff are working to ensure plenty of handwashing supplies are always available at schools and taking care to disinfect surfaces. The school is also arranging for vendors who can provide large-scale deep-cleaning of classrooms or the entire school should it become necessary.

Q: Who should stay home from school?

A: Currently students and staff without symptoms of illness are advised to come to school.

All children and staff members with respiratory symptoms and a fever (>100 F / >38C) should remain home (from school and other activities) until they have had no fever for 24 hours (without fever medication). Students and staff who have severe productive coughs (i.e., spewing respiratory droplets) that are not typical for them should also stay home (however, those with only mild, dry coughs and sneezing may come to school if feeling well and no fever).

A student or staff member who has been to any part of China within the past two weeks (since February 3, 2020) should be excluded from school for 14 days, beginning the day after they left China. [Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan are not considered part of mainland China for this guidance, at this time.]

It's also important to remember that students should not be excluded from school or any activities based on their race or country of origin.

Q: What are the common symptoms of COVID-19?

A: Symptoms most commonly include fever with cough or shortness of breath, although some people have fewer or no symptoms at all. Headache, sore throat, and runny nose also occur with this virus. Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear as soon as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

Q: How is COVID-19 spread?

A: COVID-19 can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, such as coughing or sneezing. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in these droplets or come into contact with these droplets and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth. It is not yet known whether people carrying the virus, but have no symptoms, can spread the virus to others.

Q: Is COVID-19 dangerous?

A: Most people with this infection will recover on their own. For most people, COVID-19 causes only mild illness, although it can make some people very ill. Older people, and those with pre-existing medical conditions appear to be more vulnerable.

Q: How likely am I to catch this virus?

A: If you are not in an area where COVID-19 is spreading, or if you have not travelled from one of those areas or have not been in close contact with someone who has and is feeling unwell, your chances of getting it are currently low.

Q: Should I (or my child) wear a mask?

A: Wearing of masks in public is not currently being recommended for Americans by the CDC nor by our local public health department. It will be discouraged in schools. Handwashing is considered the best protection from infectious diseases.

Q: What should I do for now?

A: The best thing you can do is take normal preventative steps to reduce the spread of illness. This means making sure you and your family are up to date with flu shots and immunizations, as well as practicing basic hygiene, including sleeping well and eating nutritiously.

Handwashing is key. Wash your hands regularly - after using and handling used tissues, after blowing your nose, before and after eating, and after using a restroom. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based (60%+) hand sanitizer.

Cover your cough or sneeze - don't direct it into the air or in your hands, and avoid touching your face or rubbing your eyes, nose or mouth.

Q: We plan on traveling during Spring Break. Should we change our plans?

A: Before you go, please check the [CDC's health notices](#) for up-to-date information about travel.

Q: Where can I find more information about COVID-19?

A: Please see the following resources for more information about COVID-19.

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency](#)
- [California Department of Public Health](#)