



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

## **Novel Coronavirus Article for Chinese Community** ***Fairfax County Health Department***

We know the expanding outbreak of respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-2019) is especially worrisome to Chinese-American families. You may have a different view of this evolving situation than other Americans because you, or someone you know, have recently traveled to China or welcomed family or friends from China to your home for the Lunar New Year.

There is a lot we don't yet know about this virus and it is natural to be fearful of things that are new and unknown. The number of cases in China continues to grow and that is concerning. However, the immediate risk to most Americans remains low. The public health system is taking a multi-layered approach to keep the virus from spreading in the community, including aggressive actions such as mandatory quarantine of those who have recently traveled to Hubei province and self-quarantine of travelers from elsewhere in China.

Every day the Health Department works behind the scenes to protect the community from all kinds of infectious diseases. Public health measures like screening people for illness, keeping those who are ill away from others, and investigating cases when they occur are used to limit the spread of infections such as measles, tuberculosis or meningitis. While the novel coronavirus is new, we are using these tested public health practices to keep it contained.

There have been no cases of coronavirus in Fairfax County. If a person does become sick with the novel coronavirus in Fairfax County, the Health Department will ensure the patient is isolated and away from others, identify anyone who may be at risk from being in close contact with this patient, and then monitor those close contacts for symptoms of the disease.

We need your help in preventing this novel coronavirus from spreading in the United States. If you were in China in the last 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, it's important that you seek medical care. Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms. If you have not been in China in the last 14 days, your risk of coronavirus infection is low and any respiratory symptoms are most likely from common viruses that spread in the U.S. each winter such as flu. To protect yourself and others from becoming ill, we recommend that you:

- Avoid contact with others and do not travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.

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### **Fairfax County Health Department**

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- Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

Some people who aren't feeling sick may think they need to wear a mask to protect themselves. While this is not harmful, there is not good evidence that this will protect you from viral respiratory disease. Washing your hands frequently and covering your coughs and sneezes with a tissue will do more to keep you and others healthy.

Please also take a moment to visit our website, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus). We will post regular updates when there is important information to share with you. And there is one more thing you can do to help. Ask your family and friends to read this article too.

Together, we can keep our community healthy and safe.

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