

Novel coronavirus/COVID-19

February 28, 2020

The novel coronavirus (which causes a disease known as COVID-19) has infected some people in the United States. Most of those cases have been associated with travel to China or other at-risk areas. While the potential public health threat posed by this coronavirus is high, the individual risk depends on exposure, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to the virus at this time, the immediate health risk from this coronavirus is considered low, the CDC said.

Coronavirus usually causes an upper respiratory tract illness like the common cold. Patients with this new coronavirus have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath according to the [CDC](#).

It's still cold and flu season, and the same practices that stop the spread of these common illnesses are recommended:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care
- Cover mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces you touch.

There is no specific treatment for coronavirus. Most infected people will recover on their own. **If you or a family member have traveled recently to an [area of risk](#), or if you think you may have been exposed to the virus and have symptoms of respiratory illness, you should call the advice number on your Kaiser Permanente membership card for further instructions.**

It's important to call us before you come in. Calling ahead helps us direct you to the most appropriate care, and take precautions to protect other members, patients, and employees.

Visit the [CDC website](#) for the latest coronavirus information.