

Dear University Community,

The purpose of this message is to provide important information to you about the recent health concerns with the outbreak of COVID-19 that began in December 2019 in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The University Wellness Center, the office of Risk Management, and the Office for Global Citizenship routinely monitor world health issues that could pose a threat to campus and members of our community. Currently, we know of no students or employees who have been affected by the virus. We are well past the incubation period for any students who traveled to mainland China over the winter break. Again, we do not have reason to believe that any of our students, staff, or faculty have come into contact with COVID-19, but we also want to exercise appropriate caution to keep you healthy.

Feel free to call the University Health Service if you have any questions or concerns at 931-598-1270.

What is novel coronavirus, now called COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a newly identified coronavirus that is causing an outbreak of pneumonia illness. It was first identified in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.

Since then, the virus has been identified in multiple other countries, including cases in the U.S.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [human coronaviruses](#) are common throughout the world and usually cause mild to moderate illness in people. This new virus is a public health concern because:

- It is newly identified, so much is still unknown about it.
- Two other human coronaviruses, MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV, have caused severe illness.

What is the risk in the U.S.?

The CDC considers this new virus a public health concern based on current information.

However, the **immediate health risk to the general US public is considered low at this time.** The CDC and the World Health Organization are closely monitoring the situation and providing ongoing guidance.

What are the symptoms and how is it transmitted?

[Symptoms](#) may be flu-like, ranging from mild to serious, and include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing.

Person-to-person spread is occurring, although it's unclear exactly how it is transmitted and how easily the virus spreads between people.

What is the treatment?

People infected with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. Currently, there is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19 infection. (source: [CDC](#))

What prevention measures are recommended?

There is no vaccine to prevent this virus, and the [CDC](#) advises that the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

Recommended actions to help prevent the spread of any respiratory viruses are as follows:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- 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.

It is important to know that the clinical criteria for testing are narrow; the graphic below outlines criteria for testing. (See chart below)

Clinical Features	& Epidemiologic Risk
Fever or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath)	AND Any person, including health care workers, who has had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed 2019-nCoV patient within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath)	AND A history of travel from Hubei Province, China within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever and signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) requiring hospitalization	AND A history of travel from mainland China within 14 days of symptom onset

Measures to detect this virus among those who are allowed entry into the United States (U.S. citizens, residents and family) who have been in China within 14 days also are being implemented.

If you meet the above criteria you should:

Seek medical care right away. **Before you go to a doctor’s office, the University Health Service, Health Department, or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.** Remember that your local Health Department is also available to you here, in Franklin County or Grundy County, and in your home county.

Medical Resources:

- Sewanee Hospital/ER: 931-598-5691
- Franklin County Health Department: 931-967-3826.
- Grundy County Health Department: 931-692-3641.
- University Health Service: 931-598-1270.

General Guidelines for Anyone with the Virus:

- Do not travel while sick. Please do not use public transportation.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
- Avoid contact with others.

CDC Travel Recommendations

Spring Break is upon us and for some, that means travel. We are aware of reports that the COVID-19 has spread to other countries and will continue to monitor the situation.

If you are planning to travel abroad this spring or summer, please stay up to date with CDC travel warnings and recommendations specific to COVID-19. These can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

The CDC recommends against non-essential travel to [China](#) and [South Korea](#). If you must travel to a country with a widespread outbreak of COVID-19:

- Avoid contact with others.
- Avoid animals (alive or dead), animal markets, and products that come from animals (such as uncooked meat).
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Older adults and travelers with underlying health issues may be at risk for more severe disease and should discuss travel to China or Korea with their health care provider.
- Avoid contact with sick people.

Other specific travel information related to vaccines, safety, and malaria prevention can be found here: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>

For more information, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19](#).

Monitoring the Situation

The University Wellness Center and the offices of Risk Management and Global Citizenship are following the situation closely and are in contact with the CDC and the Tennessee Department of Health related to upcoming student international travel. We will continue to update the link on the University Wellness Center's home page as this situation evolves.