



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner

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CITY TAKING PRECAUTIONS AGAINST 2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

The City Health Department is working with local and federal partners to respond to a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) that was first identified in early January in China

January 21, 2020 – The Health Department is working with local, state, and federal partners in response to an outbreak in China caused by a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [began screening passengers arriving from Wuhan, China on Friday \(January 17\)](#) at John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), as well at San Francisco (SFO) and Los Angeles (LAX) airports.

“CDC and WHO are learning more about this new coronavirus every day,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot**. “At this time, the actual risk to New Yorkers is low, but our level of preparedness is high, and we are monitoring the situation daily to determine if our plans to protect New Yorkers need to be adjusted accordingly.”

The Health Department, in collaboration with federal, state, and local partners, has implemented procedures to transport arriving persons that the CDC identifies with symptoms concerning for the 2019-nCoV for medical evaluation and testing. In addition, the Department is working with other healthcare and government partners, including NYC Health + Hospitals and the State Department of Health, and NYC Emergency Management to execute evaluation protocols for potential patients with 2019-nCoV and ensure the City’s response is unified and tightly coordinated.

As part of its ongoing special pathogens preparedness efforts, NYC Health + Hospitals is well equipped to respond to the 2019-nCoV virus or any other infectious disease threat. It is distributing to frontline staff up-to-date public health clinical information on the 2019-nCoV virus, including infection prevention and control, personal protective equipment usage and practices, instructions on specimen collection, and in-service trainings on ‘donning and doffing’ personal protective gear. The public hospital system has also embedded travel screening into the electronic health record system to ensure that any patient walking into any NYC Health + Hospital facility is promptly identified and isolated. NYC Health + Hospitals will also collaborate across public health agencies, such as the NYC and NYS Health Departments and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to monitor the outbreak closely.

The city Department of Health is sharing information and technical assistance about 2019-nCoV with healthcare providers broadly and is also specifically focusing efforts to inform healthcare providers serving the Chinese community.

The New York City Emergency Management Department is also briefing its private sector partners, many of whom have international offices and operations.

The Health Department has shared the following CDC recommendations with healthcare providers regarding travelers to Wuhan:

- Avoid contact with sick people;
- 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 travelers and those with underlying health issues may be at risk for more severe disease and should discuss travel to Wuhan with their healthcare provider.

For those who recently traveled to Wuhan and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, CDC recommends:

- Seek medical care right away. Before going to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about recent travel and symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Not travel while sick.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not 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.

To date, no passengers arriving from Wuhan or connecting flights at JFK have needed medical evaluation. However, New York City is fully prepared to transport individuals showing symptoms or who receive positive diagnoses as needed

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