



#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in New Mexico


### Could I have COVID-19?

If any of the following are true, call the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) at (505) 827-0006:

- You have fever, cough, or shortness of breath, **and** in the 14 days before your symptoms started, you visited China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, **or** were in contact

with a person known to have COVID-19

- You do not have fever, cough, or shortness of breath, but you did travel to China, Iran, Italy, or South Korea, in the last 14 days, **or** were in contact with a person known to have COVID-19

## **What can I do to protect myself from COVID-19?**

Just like with many other respiratory illnesses, the best way to protect yourself is to wash your hands thoroughly and regularly, to cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue, and avoid contact with people who are coughing or sneezing. Also stay home from work or school when you are sick.

## **Are there cases confirmed in the United States?**

The number of confirmed cases in the United States is available at the CDC's COVID-19 web page.

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## **What we are doing at NMDOH**

Statewide Communication

The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) is actively responding to the novel coronavirus that is causing community spread in many countries around the world, and a small number of cases in the United States. Since late January, NMDOH began publishing weekly press releases and information on our website to help New Mexicans keep updated on the current situation and on professional guidance to stay healthy.

We have also held multiple web conferences with hospitals, emergency medical services, childcare organizations, universities, and schools to provide updates, guidance for preparing and responding to the possibility of cases in New Mexico, and to answer questions that our response stakeholders have. We have used the Health Alert Network for the healthcare community to update them on current response activities and guidelines for diagnosis, infection control, and notification procedures should they identify a suspect case.

### **Monitoring and Screening**

New Mexico has not yet had a patient with the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. We are currently working to identify cases as early as possible and implement isolation procedures to prevent further spread of the virus, should we have a case. Those procedures currently focus on 1) monitoring asymptomatic travelers from China, South Korea, Iran, and Italy during the time when they might develop disease if they were exposed to the virus and 2) supporting screening and infection control procedures in healthcare settings to identify illness in travelers or contacts of known COVID-19 patients. We have also begun to test symptomatic individuals with a negative flu test to ensure that the virus causing COVID-19 is not circulating in New Mexico.

NMDOH is being notified of returning travelers through our 24/7 call line by both travelers and healthcare providers. Returning China and Iran travelers are also being screened by Customs and Border Protection and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and we are notified when they arrive in the U.S. These travelers are asked to stay home for 14 days from the time they left China, South Korea, Iran, or Italy, and refrain from unnecessary interactions with other people until this period is completed. NMDOH is in daily contact to confirm the absence of fever or respiratory symptoms.

We are also actively monitoring the hospital bed capacity in New Mexico and the availability of facemasks, respirators, and other personal protective equipment needed for infection control. We are working with healthcare facilities to be prepared if there are shortages and to implement alternative sites for healthcare if needed, and to increase the supply of personal protective equipment.

### **Emergency Response Planning**

We have also begun to refresh emergency response plans should this virus become a global pandemic and community spread occurs in New Mexico. Based on years of planning for the next influenza pandemic, a virus that is similar to the novel coronavirus, we have adapted our plans based on current knowledge of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. We have focused on measures to track the cases identified in New Mexico, to prevent spread of infections through social distancing, to ensure continuity of the healthcare system where patient volumes may require supplemental care sites, and to anticipate special approaches to effectively manage the needs that New Mexicans have for information and

healthcare services. We are also stepping up our efforts to communicate what we know about COVID-19.

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