



Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) is offering this resource to provide information about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and to guide the management of students and staff who have returned Indiana from either recently traveling to areas with known transmission of the novel coronavirus or with a known exposure to a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19. This guidance is based on directives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Many university and college students, faculty and staff in Indiana are concerned about the current outbreak of COVID-19. The CDC is working hard to learn as much as possible about COVID-19 so that we can better understand how it spreads and better characterize its associated illness. ISDH is also developing guidance and education materials in the face of evolving information. Please visit the ISDH COVID-19 webpage for FAQs and other resources that can be shared with members of your school community: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm>.

There continues to be a significant increase in the number of people infected with COVID-19 cases globally and evidence that infection can be transmitted from an asymptomatic person. To date, Indiana does not have any confirmed COVID-19 cases and COVID-19 is NOT currently spreading in the community. The CDC advises the immediate health risk for the general public from COVID-19 is considered low.

However, because the risk of exposure to this new coronavirus globally is increasing, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency to allow local, state, and federal officials to fully coordinate responses in partnership with public health departments, emergency management teams, airports, health care professionals and first responders.

**In the United States, the threat to the general public for contracting COVID-19 remains low.**

## General Information

---

### **What is novel coronavirus?**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Many of them infect animals, but some coronaviruses from animals can evolve (change) into a new human coronavirus that can spread from person-to-person. This is what happened with the current novel coronavirus known as COVID-19. Diseases from coronaviruses in people typically cause mild to moderate illness, like the common cold. Some, like the SARS or MERS viruses, cause serious infections like pneumonia. The name of this new virus is SARS-CoV-2; the disease caused by this virus is known as COVID-19.

### **What are common symptoms of COVID-19?**

Information to date suggests this virus is causing symptoms consistent with a respiratory illness such as cough, fever, and shortness of breath. Under current CDC guidance, if a person has traveled from mainland China and develops any of these symptoms within 14 days of their return, they should seek medical care right away. They should first call the doctor's office or emergency room and tell them about their symptoms and recent travel.

### **How is novel coronavirus spread?**

Like other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, human coronaviruses most commonly spread to others from an infected person who has symptoms through:

- Droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

### **How is COVID-19 treated?**

There is no specific treatment for COVID-19; however, many of the symptoms can be treated. Treatment is based on the patient's condition. There is currently no vaccine to prevent novel coronavirus. Education on nonpharmaceutical interventions, including everyday preventive actions, avoiding close contact and surface cleaning measures as outlined below, is recommended.

### **What preventive measures should be taken to help reduce the spread of respiratory viruses, like COVID-19?**

ISDH recommends that colleges and universities increase education on respiratory and hand hygiene. As with other respiratory illnesses, there are steps that everyone can take daily to reduce the risk of getting sick or infecting others with circulating viruses.

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Help young children do the same.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limit close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands).
- Get a flu shot – it's not too late to be protected against influenza.
- Be aware that facemasks are not needed for the general public.

In addition, it is recommended that colleges and universities take these additional measures:

- Remind faculty, staff, and students that when they are ill, they should remain home; persons who have been ill should be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to classes and work.
- Ensure that your leave policies are flexible and non-punitive for both students and staff.
- Adopt sick leave policies that allow employees to stay home when ill. Develop other flexible leave policies that allow employees to stay home and work remotely when sick or caring for sick household members. Make sure that employees are aware of these policies.
- Continue to encourage welcoming environments for ALL members of our community.
- Always check reliable sources for up-to-date, accurate information about COVID-19; local, state and federal authorities are listed below.

## **Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures**

Special processes beyond routine cleaning are not necessary nor recommended to slow the spread of respiratory illness. Schools should follow standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting with an EPA-registered product. Typically, this means daily sanitizing surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as bathrooms, water coolers, desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles and phones.

## Other Response FAQs

---

### **Do campus events need to be canceled?**

At this time, there is no need to cancel school or social events. There are no restrictions on public gatherings. Faculty, staff, and students should be reminded that part of good health hygiene is staying home from events when they are ill.

### **What do we need to know about managing travelers, including students and staff, returning from mainland China or other countries that have cases of COVID-19?**

Currently, travelers returning from China are screened at one of 11 airports in the United States where the CDC has quarantine stations. Those with symptoms are referred for medical evaluation. Asymptomatic persons with travel to Hubei Province, China within the past 14 days are subject to mandatory quarantine at sites near the airports where they are screened. Asymptomatic persons with travel to other parts of mainland China (not including Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan) within the past 14 days are allowed to reach their final destination where they are instructed to self-quarantine at home and are monitored by public health authorities.

In Indiana, health monitoring for returned travelers is overseen by the local health department in the person's county of residence.

At this time, the CDC has not recommended additional active monitoring or quarantine for travelers from locations outside of mainland China. As a precaution, people who develop fever and/or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days of travel from a country where COVID-19 is spreading should call ahead to notify their healthcare provider of their symptoms and recent travel before visiting a healthcare facility.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and universities should refer to the CDC's [website](#) for the most up-to-date travel-related guidance.

### **What do we do about students studying in countries with reported COVID-19 cases? Should they come back to the U.S.?**

The CDC has not issued formal guidance regarding students studying in countries with reported COVID-19 cases. This is a rapidly evolving situation and universities should refer to the CDC's website for the most up-to-date travel-related guidance.

### **How is ISDH implementing the traveler directives and how will universities/colleges be informed?**

- Returning travelers who do not need quarantine, but who are recommended to practice social distancing (at least 6 feet) and health monitoring will be contacted by the local health department in their county of residence and provided guidance for social distancing and self-monitoring of their health status for up to 14 days. They will be instructed to contact the local health department should they become ill.
- The monitoring and social distancing of medium risk travelers will be done with public safety and privacy in mind. ISDH will not provide schools with information about specific travelers but will encourage returning students to contact the administration or student health if they wish. ISDH will also make sure that students receive appropriate services and testing should they become ill. Should students live in dormitories, they will need to work with the school administration to find an alternative living situation where they can safely stay without being in close contact with others.

### **What is social distancing?**

Social distancing means remaining out of public places where close contact with others may occur [e.g., dormitories, schools and other classroom settings, cafeterias, shopping centers, movie theaters, stadiums, workplaces (unless the person works in an office space that allows complete distancing from others), and local public conveyances (e.g., bus, subway, taxi, ride share)] for the duration of the potential incubation period unless presence in such locations is approved by ISDH.

**What are the colleges and university responsible for?**

Colleges and universities should be prepared to provide suitable housing and basic needs for students who need social distancing and cannot return home. The university will need to identify a location to house the student with minimal contact with others for up to 14 days. The student will need to have no public activities for these 14 days, including not attending classes, parties/gatherings, meetings, etc. The university will also need to identify a way that the student is able to receive meals with minimal exposure to others, as well as accommodate these students' academic needs to minimize the impact on their academic success.

If the student lives close to the campus (driving distance within 1-2 hours) they may be allowed to socially distance at home and follow the guidelines above for restricted activities. Prior to being sent home, ISDH will need to be notified. If the student's home is outside Indiana, ISDH will coordinate with the student's local health department, as well as with the student and their family to assure that tracking and monitoring of the student continues as needed. If faculty or staff are required to restrict their activities, we request that schools extend or adapt policies to provide paid leave for such employees or allow remote working, if feasible.

**How will schools be informed if there is a case on campus?**

*If there is a case confirmed at your campus*, ISDH will call staff and work with the designated staff from the college/university to identify who was in contact with the case and to begin the process to track and monitor contacts. ISDH Office of Public Affairs will also coordinate with university's PIO to develop messaging for mass communications.

**How can I get more information?**

ISDH has set up a call center for anyone to call for more information on COVID-19. Please call 317-233-7125 (317-233-1325 after hours) or e-mail [epiresource@isdh.in.gov](mailto:epiresource@isdh.in.gov) if you have more questions.

**For more information:**

- Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH)
  - <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, National)
  - <http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>
- World Health Organization (WHO, International)
  - <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

Adapted from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health