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“Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as [Middle East Respiratory Syndrome \(MERS-CoV\)](#) and [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome \(SARS-CoV\)](#). [A novel coronavirus \(nCoV\)](#) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans”.

“Coronaviruses are zoonotic, this means it is transmitted between animals and people. Detailed investigations found that SARS-CoV was transmitted from civet cats to humans and MERS-CoV from dromedary camels to humans. Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans.”

While at this present time there is no evidence that common animals such as pets dogs and cats are infective with the coronavirus, however best practice is to wash hands after touching any pets to protect against E.coli and salmonella.

Respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties are common signs of infection. More severe cases include, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. Best practices to prevent infection as well as spreading infection include regular hand washing, covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, thoroughly cooking meals such as meat and eggs. Staying away from individuals showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing is recommended, especially since this virus is so new, it’s so different that it warrants its own vaccine. While vaccines against pneumonia, such as pneumococcal vaccine and Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib) vaccine, do not provide protection against the new coronavirus, it is highly recommended to protect against respiratory illness and highly recommend to protect your wellbeing.

#### **FREQUENTLY ASKED Q&A:**

**“Are antibiotics effective in preventing and treating the new coronavirus?”**

No, antibiotics do not work against viruses, only bacteria.

The new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a virus and, therefore, antibiotics should not be used as a means of prevention or treatment.

However, if you are hospitalized for the 2019-nCoV, you may receive antibiotics because bacterial co-infection is possible.

#### **Wash your hands frequently**

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub if your hands are not visibly dirty.

**Why?** Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub eliminates the virus if it is on your hands.

## **Practice respiratory hygiene**

When coughing and sneezing, cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – discard tissue immediately into a closed bin and clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

**Why?** Covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing prevent the spread of germs and viruses. If you sneeze or cough into your hands, you may contaminate objects or people that you touch.

## **Maintain social distancing**

Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and other people, particularly those who are coughing, sneezing and have a fever.

**Why?** When someone who is infected with a respiratory disease, like 2019-nCoV, coughs or sneezes they project small droplets containing the virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the virus.

## **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth**

**Why?** Hands touch many surfaces which can be contaminated with the virus. If you touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your contaminated hands, you can transfer the virus from the surface to yourself.

## **If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early**

Tell your health care provider if you have traveled in an area in China where 2019-nCoV has been reported, or if you have been in close contact with someone with who has traveled from China and has respiratory symptoms.

**Why?** Whenever you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing it's important to seek medical attention promptly as this may be due to a respiratory infection or other serious condition. Respiratory symptoms with fever can have a range of causes, and depending on your personal travel history and circumstances, 2019-nCoV could be one of them."

## **World Health Organization**

<https://www.who.int/>