



Cape Girardeau County Public Health Center

1121 Linden, P.O. Box 1839
Cape Girardeau, MO 63702 – 1839
www.cgcohealthdept.com
Phone (573) 335-7846 Fax (573) 335-5909

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Weekly Provider Update--- COVID-19

This summary is to inform you of important changes to current recommendations or alert you to situations that require your awareness. It is not meant to replace the guidance documents that are being shared. Items below are simply an overview of pertinent information for the week.

- **New name established for disease:**
 - On February 11, 2020 the World Health Organization announced an official name for the disease that is causing the current outbreak of coronavirus illness, **COVID-19**. Guidance documents are being updated accordingly.
- **Case definitions have been expanded:**
 - What this means is that we will see a large increase in case counts to be certain that the definition is broad enough to catch the wide spectrum of disease being seen. The complete definitions can be found at this link: [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/global-surveillance-for-human-infection-with-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/global-surveillance-for-human-infection-with-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov))

Commonly asked questions you may get from patients*:

- 1) **How does the virus spread?**

The new coronavirus is a respiratory virus which spreads primarily through contact with an infected person through respiratory droplets generated when a person, for example, coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose. It is important that everyone practice good respiratory hygiene.
- 2) **Should I wear a mask to protect myself?**

WHO advises on rational use of medical masks thus avoiding unnecessary wastage of precious resources and potential misuse of masks. This means using masks only if you have respiratory symptoms (coughing or sneezing), have suspected 2019-nCoV infection with mild symptoms or are caring for someone with suspected 2019-nCoV infection.
- 3) **Are there specific medications to prevent or treat COVID-19?**

To date, there is no specific medicine recommended to prevent or treat the novel coronavirus. Some specific treatments are under investigation and will be tested through clinical trials, however, currently there are only supportive therapies being consistently used to treat patients infected with COVID-19.
- 4) **How long does virus survive on surfaces?**

It is still not known how long the 2019-nCoV virus survives on surfaces, although preliminary information suggests the virus may survive a few hours or more on certain types of surfaces. Simple disinfectants can kill the virus making it no longer possible to infect people.
- 5) **Is it safe to receive a package from China or any other place where the virus has been identified?**

Yes, it is safe. People receiving packages are not at risk of contracting the new coronavirus. From experience with other coronaviruses, we know that these types of viruses don't survive long on objects, such as letters or packages.

*Answers adapted from World Health Organization's Q&A on Coronaviruses.