



**Superintendent's Office**  
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Dear Parents and Guardians:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have indicated that there should be a **low degree of concern** regarding Coronavirus currently; however, there continues to be a lot of talk in the media (mainstream and social media) regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19 or SARS CoV2) and its potential spread in the United States. The CDC has stated that school districts and other public entities should begin planning in the event this grows to pandemic status.

The purpose of this communication is two-fold; first, to provide all of you with some relevant facts and resources and second, to make you aware of some of the initial planning that we are engaged in. I have been in contact with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) as well as our State and local Health Departments and School Nurses over the past several days. The information I am sharing is as current as possible, and I will do my best to ensure that our school community receives relevant and timely updates if necessary in the future.

First and most importantly, the CDC has stated that currently Coronavirus is a low-level concern. **Coronavirus is NOT actively spreading in the U.S. at this time, and the CDC is NOT recommending any specific actions other than those taken to prevent the spread of other respiratory illnesses such as the flu.** Confirmed cases in Wisconsin are being monitored by the Health Department, and individuals infected are on voluntary sequestration in their homes to keep the virus from spreading.

From the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) website:

*The virus has now been detected in 37 locations internationally, including the United States. The virus has been named "SARS-CoV2" and the disease it causes has been named "coronavirus disease 2019" (abbreviated COVID-19). Imported cases of COVID-19 in travelers have been detected in the United States. Person-to-person spread of COVID-19 also has been seen among close contacts of returned travelers from Wuhan, but at this time, this virus is NOT currently spreading in the community in the United States.*

*A continued theme from public health officials is - it's currently flu and respiratory disease season and getting vaccinated for influenza, taking [everyday preventive actions](#) to stop the spread of germs, and taking flu antivirals if prescribed is recommended. CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:*

- ◆ *Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.*
- ◆ *Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.*
- ◆ *Avoid close contact with people who are sick.*
- ◆ *Stay home when you are sick.\**
- ◆ *Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.*
- ◆ *Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.*
- ◆ *These are everyday habits that can help prevent the spread of several viruses.*

\* I have heard some concerns from parents and/or guardians regarding possible truancy consequences if they choose to keep their child home due to illness. As a result, I offer the following (taken from the DPI website and relating to our statutory obligations as well as District policies and procedures):

*[A] school board must establish a written policy specifying the reasons for which pupils may be permitted to be absent from school, [Wis. Stat. sec. 118.16\(4\)\(a\)](#). However, parents may excuse their child's absence in writing [or by calling in or entering an absence into the Skyward Family Access system in accordance with school attendance policy and procedures] before the absence. A child may not be excused for more than 10 days in a school year under this provision, [Wis. Stat. sec. 118.15\(3\)\(c\)](#). The Board may excuse children who are temporarily not in proper physical or mental condition to attend school but can be expected to return to school upon termination or abatement of the illness or condition, [Wis. Stat. sec. 118.15\(3\)\(a\)](#). An excuse under this paragraph shall be in writing and shall state the time period for which it is valid not to exceed 30 days.*

*There is no limit in state law regarding how many days a student may be excused from school because of illness [with appropriate documentation from a medical professional]. A school district defines excused and unexcused absences within its local attendance policy, typically shared with parents in the form of a student handbook.*

In short, if a child is excused from school due to illness and there is a doctor's note supporting said illness, those absences will NOT be counted towards truancy consequences. Issues with truancy typically arise if a student has multiple unexcused absences and/or tardies which result in possible truancy consequences even if additional absences are due to illness and covered by a doctor's note. For clarification regarding the number of absences your child(ren) may have and to avoid possible truancy actions, or to learn more about school attendance procedures, please contact your child's school office for more details.

The CDC is also NOT recommending any changes in sanitation practices in schools at this time; however, I have been in contact with our Buildings and Grounds Department regarding facility cleaning practices and our custodians are well aware of taking preemptive steps to disinfect touchpoints more frequently, etc. as this is common practice during flu season.

Additionally, the CDC is recommending that school districts develop a plan in the event the virus causes "disruptions in normal daily activities" if it spreads in the future. To that end, I have been in contact with our administrative team to develop plans to address student learning and minutes of instruction requirements in the event a school or schools would have to be closed for a prolonged period of time due to an outbreak. Future decisions on school closures due to illness (if necessary) will be made in conjunction with our local or State Health department. At this time, there are NO recommendations that schools do anything other than plan. Additional information on school closures and/or lost instructional time will be communicated in the future as necessary and as dictated by circumstances.

Finally, the CDC has also emphasized that there can be certain stigma associated with the Coronavirus as it was first identified in China. In short, "being Chinese or Asian American does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19." Providing accurate information is the best way to prevent stigma.

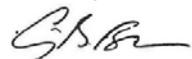
**Resources:**

- ✘ **Wood County Health Department:** 715-421-8911
- ✘ **CDC site regarding Coronavirus:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>  
(This resource will be updated regularly by the CDC.)
- ✘ **DPI site regarding Coronavirus:** <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/2019-novel-coronavirus>
- ✘ **CDC site regarding Coronavirus Stigma:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/share-facts-stop-fear.html>
- ✘ **COVID Fact Sheet:** *Enclosed*
- ✘ **What to do if you are sick with COVID-19:** *Enclosed*

Again, I cannot emphasize enough that the concern about Coronavirus in the U.S. and Wisconsin is low. We will be monitoring the situation and providing relevant updates to staff and the community as they become available. To ensure that you have access to accurate, relevant information, please refer to the CDC site regarding Coronavirus listed above or by contacting your local or State Health Department or School Nurse. Information on social media regarding circumstances such as this are not always accurate.

Please feel free to contact me at 715-424-6701 or by email at [craig.broeren@wrps.net](mailto:craig.broeren@wrps.net) with any questions.

Sincerely,



Craig G. Broeren  
Superintendent

Enclosure

# What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

## What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

## Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example health care workers and close contacts of people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation.

## Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

## How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath



## What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

## How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

## There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.

### These include

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

## If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

## What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should seek medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

## Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

## Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

**If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.**

## Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

## Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

**People:** As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

**Animals:** Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) for more information.

## Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

## Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

## Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

## Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

## Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

## Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

## Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). **Before** seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department. Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

## Discontinuing home isolation

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

