Coronavirus (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions

The following FAQ was developed with information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA), and Orange County Department of Education (OCDE).

What is a novel coronavirus?

A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the [coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans](#) and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

A diagnosis with coronavirus 229E, NL63, OC43, or HKU1 is not the same as a COVID-19 diagnosis. Patients with COVID-19 will be evaluated and cared for differently than patients with common coronavirus diagnosis.

How does the virus spread?

This virus was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The first infections were linked to a live animal market, but the virus is now spreading from person-to-person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some viruses are highly contagious (like measles), while other viruses are less so.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community ("community spread") in [some affected geographic areas](#). Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

Learn what is known about the [spread of newly emerged coronaviruses](#).

Can someone who has had COVID-19 spread the illness to others?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is [spreading from person-to-person](#). Someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 can spread the illness to others. That is why CDC recommends that these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home (depending on how sick they are) until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

How long someone is actively sick can vary so the decision on when to release someone from isolation is made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with doctors, infection prevention and control experts, and public health officials and involves considering specifics of each situation including disease severity, illness signs and symptoms, and results of laboratory testing for that patient.

Current [CDC guidance for when it is OK to release someone from isolation](#) is made on a case by case basis and includes meeting all of the following requirements:

- The patient is free from fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- The patient is no longer showing symptoms, including cough.
- The patient has tested negative on at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected at least 24 hours apart.

Someone who has been released from isolation is not considered to pose a risk of infection to others.

Can someone who has been quarantined for COVID-19 spread the illness to others?

Quarantine means separating a person or group of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease but have not developed illness (symptoms) from others who have not been exposed, in order to prevent the possible spread of that disease. Quarantine is usually established for the incubation period of the communicable disease, which is the span of time during which people have developed illness after exposure. For COVID-19, the period of quarantine is 14 days from the last date of exposure, because 14 days is the longest incubation period seen for similar coronaviruses. Someone who has been released from COVID-19 quarantine is not considered a risk for spreading the virus to others because they have not developed illness during the incubation period.

Who is most at-risk for contracting COVID-19 and experiences severe complications?

The elderly and immunocompromised populations are currently most at-risk for contracting COVID-19 and also for experiencing severe complications, including death. Fortunately for our students, the risk for children remains low, with those under the age of 19 only making up 2% of the total cases globally, according to a recent report published by the World Health Organization. Even in the cases present in children, they are not demonstrating severe symptoms.

Is it recommended or is my child allowed to wear a facemask or surgical mask to prevent COVID-19?

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. It has been determined that facemasks are not effective for prevention of contracting communicable diseases, including COVID-19. Furthermore, SVUSD is strongly discouraging the use of facemasks to prevent distraction to the learning environment, widespread fear, overreaction, and possible social isolation or ostracism due to the perception that the person wearing the mask is sick.

The CDC and World Health Organization recommend masks only if you are coughing or sneezing to block the droplets from getting into the air. BUT if you are coughing or sneezing, stay home. Masks cannot prevent what's already in the air from getting in and are not recommended for people who are healthy.

The CDC, CDPH and the Orange County Health Agency continue to recommend washing hands in warm water thoroughly for 20 seconds, avoiding touching one's own face and avoiding others that are sick as best preventative methods.

If families are traveling back to the United States from other countries, will there be a self-imposed or mandatory quarantine or school exclusion?

On January 31, 2020, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared COVID-19 a public health emergency in the United States that went into effect on February 2, 2020. As part of the emergency declaration, persons traveling from mainland China to the United States were routed through select and monitored airports. Since February 3, 2020, public health officials have screened all persons returning from China.

For those identified as high risk of developing an illness, the federal, state, and/or local public health officials have monitored those individuals. If an individual has travelled after February 3rd to mainland China and was not deemed high risk, the recommendation is to self-quarantine for 14 days. If an individual travelled through mainland China and was determined high-risk at their screening, then OCHCA would exclude the student from school for 14 days and notify the school of attendance about that individual. However, if there is a student who has travelled to mainland China, was not excluded at OCHCA's direction, and is showing severe symptoms, the school will take proper precautions to exclude the student from school and inform them of their due process and right to appeal.

How can I protect myself and my child from the coronavirus?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). As a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- 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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- 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.

○ 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.

What about events, field trips or activities in large groups?

As of March 5, 2020 the Orange County Health Care Agency has not made any recommendation to close down, cancel or avoid any public events in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. This has been verified between OCHCA and the Los Angeles Department of Public Health. The District encourages participation and all planned events, field trips, and activities.

What is SVUSD doing to address COVID-19 and are there plans if COVID-19 becomes more prominent in Orange County?

SVUSD is taking preventative measures including keeping classrooms and surface areas as clean as possible and encouraging students to wash their hands frequently. SVUSD is working with county and health officials to establish protocols for schools in the event that Coronavirus spreads in Orange County and specifically, in our local community. More information will be shared as this plan develops and if there appears to be a greater need.

Helpful Resources

U.S. Department of Education- Coronavirus Website
Orange County Health Care Agency- Coronavirus Website
Orange County Department of Education Resource Links