Communicating Information About COVID-19 to the Campus Community

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 (formerly known as novel coronavirus 2019 or 2019-nCoV) is a newly identified coronavirus that is causing an outbreak of pneumonia illness. It was first identified in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.

Since then, cases have been identified in multiple other countries including the US.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), human coronaviruses are common throughout the world and usually cause mild to moderate illness in people. This new virus is a public health concern because:

- It is newly identified, so much is still unknown about it.
- Two other human coronaviruses, MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV, have caused severe illness.

What is the risk?

The CDC considers this new virus a public health concern based on current information. However, the immediate health risk to the general US public is considered low at this time. The CDC and the World Health Organization are closely monitoring the situation and providing ongoing guidance.

Symptoms and transmission:

Symptoms may be flu-like, ranging from mild to serious, and include:

- Fever
- Cough
-Difficulty breathing.

Person-to-person spread is occurring, although it's unclear exactly how it is transmitted and how easily the virus spreads between people.

What is University Health Services doing about COVID-19?

UHS is in communication with and is monitoring activity from Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), and the American College Health Association (ACHA) task force in addressing COVID-19. UHS is also coordinating with ADPH, the Office of International Affairs (OIA), and other university stakeholders regarding response. Currently, UNA has no identified or suspected cases of COVID-19 and the state of Alabama has no identified cases.
If you travel to China, Iran, South Korea, or Italy:

The CDC recommend travelers avoid travel to China, Iran, South Korea, and Italy. If you must travel, practice the following precautions:

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid animals (alive or dead), animal markets, and products that come from animals (such as uncooked meat).
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Older adults and travelers with underlying health issues may be at risk for more severe disease and should discuss travel to Wuhan with their health care provider.

Treatment:

People infected with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. Currently, there is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19 infection. (source: CDC)

Prevention:

There is no vaccine to prevent this virus, and the CDC advises that the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

Here are everyday actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses:

- 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.
- Get a flu vaccine if you have not already received one.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick (at a distance of at least 6 feet)
- 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.
Recommendations for people with respiratory symptoms:
If you have symptoms of fever, cough, and/or difficulty breathing and in the last 14 days you:

- Traveled to/through China, or
- Visited an affected region in Iran, South Korea, or Italy, or
- Had close contact with someone who had traveled to one of the affected regions and had respiratory symptoms.

You should:

- Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor’s office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- UNA students, faculty, and staff may call UHS at 256-765-4328 for questions or to schedule an appointment.
- Others may contact their health care provider or call the Lauderdale County Health Department at 256-764-7453.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Do not travel while sick. Please do not get on public transportation or just arrive at the Health Services Clinic. Call UHS (256-765-4328) instead to speak with a nurse to discuss symptoms.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.