

Kaiser Permanente – Coronavirus Notice

On January 21, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) confirmed the first U.S. case of a new coronavirus from China that is capable of human to human transmission and can cause pneumonia. Coronavirus is a member of the same family of viruses that causes colds. This new coronavirus does not appear to be highly transmissible nor severe but, similar to more virulent strains in this virus family – including SARS and MERS, coronavirus can progress to pneumonia. Typical symptoms include fever, cough, and respiratory difficulty. Treatment is similar to that for other viral infections. As more is understood about this virus, recommendations may change.

As in all cases of emerging infectious diseases, we monitor closely and follow the recommendations of the CDC. The CDC is screening arrivals from the Wuhan area of China at airports in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Atlanta. At this time, we are not screening all patients for the disease, but physicians and other caregivers are asking members and patients with fever or other symptoms about recent travel to China, and other areas of risk, as they are identified. Those who have symptoms and recently traveled to high risk areas will be isolated until they have been medically evaluated.

If members or their children have recently traveled to an area of risk and are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus, we encourage them to call the appointment and advice line at 1-800-218-1059 so we can assist with directing their care. To reduce possible exposure to others, we prefer that members who have recently traveled and are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus **not** make an appointment online or go directly to one of our facilities.

How can I prevent getting coronavirus?

The same behaviors that stop the spread of the common cold and flu will help prevent coronavirus. The Centers for Disease Control recommends:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home if you are sick.
- Covering mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Then throw the tissue away and wash your hands.
- Cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces you touch.

What should I do if I have symptoms or think I've been exposed?

If you or a family member have traveled recently to an area of risk and have symptoms of respiratory illness, you should call the appointment and advice line at 1-800-218-1059 for further instructions. It's important to call us before you come in. Calling ahead helps us direct you to the most appropriate care, and take precautions to protect other patients.