Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What is a coronavirus?
A: Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illness in animals and humans. Human coronaviruses commonly circulate in the United States and usually cause upper respiratory symptoms such as a cough or runny nose. Some coronaviruses can cause more serious illness, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV).

Q: How are coronaviruses transmitted?
A: Person-to-person transmission of coronaviruses such as SARS and MERS occurs through droplets of respiratory secretions that are spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes. This is similar to how other respiratory viruses are spread, such as the flu or viruses that cause the common cold. The risk of coronaviruses spreading from touching objects such as door handles is low.

Q: What are the symptoms of coronaviruses?
A: Coronaviruses that commonly circulate in the United States cause symptoms similar to the flu and typically cause mild to moderate respiratory illness. Common symptoms include runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, fever, and shortness of breath.

Q: What is the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?
A: On Dec. 31, 2019, Chinese authorities reported an outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan or other areas with the CoV. The cause of this outbreak was identified to be a new coronavirus, named 2019-nCoV. Cases were initially diagnosed in Wuhan, China, and in a small number of people who traveled through Wuhan to other destinations in China and other countries, including the United States. The first U.S. case was reported in a traveler returning from Wuhan on Jan. 21, 2020, in Washington state.

Q: How serious is 2019-nCoV?
A: The severity is currently unknown. There have been reports of severe illness, with a percentage resulting in death in China. To date, there have been six confirmed deaths in the United States. However, most cases have had mild illness and have been sent home from the hospital or have not required hospitalization.
Q: Have there been any cases of 2019-nCoV in the United States?

Q: What should I do if I traveled to Wuhan or the other effected areas and feel sick?
A: Persons who are experiencing symptoms such as a fever, cough or shortness of breath and have visited Wuhan or other effected areas or had close contact with someone who is suspected to be infected with the novel coronavirus in the past 14 days should seek immediate medical attention. Before you go to your primary doctor, please come by Student Health Services in the 300 Suite at Griffin Hall; call ahead and tell them your symptoms and recent travel history. Avoid contact with others. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Do not travel while sick. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Q: How can I get tested for 2019-nCoV?
A: Testing for 2019-nCoV is not available through commercial laboratories. Currently, diagnostic testing for 2019-nCoV is only being conducted at the CDC. State and local health departments are working with the CDC to perform coronavirus testing for persons who meet the CDC risk assessment criteria for testing.

Q: What should I do if I recently traveled to Wuhan or other effected areas, but do not feel sick?
A: If you have recently traveled to Wuhan or the other effected areas but do not feel ill, you should monitor yourself for symptoms. If you develop symptoms within 14 days of traveling to Wuhan or any other effected areas, you should contact a healthcare provider by phone before going to their office.

For the most up-to-date information, visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html