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Case of 2019 novel coronavirus testing for McLennan County resident

Waco, TX –The Waco-McLennan County Public Health District is currently monitoring a suspected case of the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) involving a Baylor University student who traveled to China this year. Testing for the virus was conducted on January 23, 2020 and samples are in route to the CDC. We are awaiting results at this time. The Health District is already working with Baylor University, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and our local health care providers to take immediate action according to the best practices outlined by the CDC and to provide a coordinated response.

While the risk to the general public is low, the Health District is working to identify all those who may have come in contact with the suspected case. These individuals will be monitored for fever and respiratory symptoms if the case is positive.

The patient is doing well with minimal symptoms. The patient has been asked to self-isolate. Baylor University is working with the patient to ensure that needs are being met during this self-isolation period.

As a precaution, anyone with the respiratory symptoms who were in Wuhan on or after December 1, 2019 and has onset of illness within two weeks of leaving, should seek medical attention. Make sure to contact the healthcare provider's office before going to the medical center to receive proper infection control instructions.

Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of this illness include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. This novel coronavirus has the potential to cause severe disease and death. Preliminary information suggests older adults and people with underlying health conditions or compromised immune systems may be at higher risk of severe illness from this virus. Many characteristics of this novel coronavirus and how it may affect people are still unclear.

The CDC clinical criteria have been developed based on what is known about MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV and are subject to change as additional information becomes available.

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Prevention recommendations from the CDC

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, 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.

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for 2019-nCoV infection. People infected with 2019-nCoV should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms.

Travel Information

CDC recommends avoiding non-essential travel to Wuhan, China. Chinese officials have closed transport within and out of Wuhan, including buses, subways, trains, and the airport. Remain alert if traveling to other parts of China by practicing the precautions below.

Travelers to China should

- 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.

If you traveled to China in the last 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, 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.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Not travel while sick.
- 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.