



Protecting and Improving the Health of Iowans

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Iowans Returning from Countries Affected by COVID-19 Urged to Self- Isolate (3/3/20)

Author: **Polly
Carver-**

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The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) today requested Iowans returning from a country where novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is spreading to voluntarily self-isolate for 14 days following their return. Areas in this travel notice currently include:

- China
- Hong Kong
- Iran
- Italy
- Japan
- South Korea

Individuals returning from affected areas are asked to stay home and monitor their symptoms for 14 days and if they become ill and need to seek medical care, they should call ahead to their doctor's office and inform them of their recent travel. "We recognize staying at home for 14 days is an inconvenience, but it is an important way to limit the spread of a variety of illnesses, including COVID-19. The department urges employers to work with staff to consider flexible leave policies and tele-working options," said IDPH Medical Director Dr. Caitlin Pedati.

Currently, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Iowa; however, experts predict there will eventually be community spread. The proactive actions announced today by the department can help delay and/or control this potential spread.

There are things all Iowans can do to help prevent the spread of all viruses, including influenza and COVID-19:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your upper arm/elbow
- Clean your hands frequently with soap and water
- Contain germs by staying home when ill

Residents should prepare for the potential of COVID-19 in the same way they prepare for severe weather or other events that could disrupt their normal routine. This includes making a plan and discussing it with your family.

Symptoms of the COVID-19 in people who have been exposed can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying.

For information and updates related to COVID-19, visit <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus> and follow IDPH on Facebook (@IowaDepartmentofPublicHealth) and Twitter (@IAPublicHealth).

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Lucas State Office Building

321 E. 12th Street - Des Moines, IA 50319-0075

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