



## Talking Points: COVID-19

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- There is an expanding global outbreak of a respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus. The disease the virus causes has been named COVID-19.
  - While most COVID-19 cases are associated with travel to or from China, person-to-person spread is now being reported in other places, including Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand.
- There are currently no cases of COVID-19 in Iowa, and there is no person-to-person spread in the U.S.
  - For the general public, who are unlikely to be exposed to the virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is low; however, the ***potential*** of the public health threat is high.
- IDPH and Local Public Health Departments have been working with public and private partners and continue to prepare plans and procedures in case they should be needed.
  - IDPH and Local Public Health Departments will be providing more information and engaging with these partners over the coming days and weeks.
- Public health prepares for these kinds of disease outbreaks consistently and routinely with exercises and drills with local, state and national partners.
- It is important for Iowans to 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.
  - Make a plan and discuss it with your family. What would you do if you could not go to work or school because of illness? What if your daycare provider was ill? How would you get groceries if you were ill? These are all questions to think about.
- It is normal to be concerned about a new virus.
  - Being uncertain and anxious about COVID-19 is normal, especially with reports of illness and death in other countries.
  - It is important to understand the risk of influenza is much higher than the risk of COVID-19 in Iowa right now.
  - Prevention of COVID-19 is the same as that for other respiratory illnesses (like flu):
    - 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