



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

VICTORIA COUNTY

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Press Release

02/28/2020

The Victoria County Public Health Department continues to monitor a novel (new) coronavirus that was recently detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and is causing an outbreak of respiratory disease. On February 11, 2020, the World Health Organization named the disease coronavirus disease 2019 (abbreviated “COVID-19”). Chinese health officials have reported tens of thousands of cases of COVID-19 in China, with the virus reportedly spreading from person-to-person in parts of that country. **This virus should not be confused with other common human coronaviruses known to cause illness.**

COVID-19 illnesses, most of them associated with travel from Wuhan, also are being reported in a growing number of international locations, including the United States with some person-to-person spread of this virus taking place outside of China. The United States reported the first confirmed instance of person-to-person spread with this virus on January 30, 2020. **Currently there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Victoria County.**

The Victoria County Public Health Department (VCPHD) is working closely with the Texas Department of State and Health Services, local health and medical partners, and our emergency management and first responder community in monitoring and planning for the developing outbreak. **The Victoria County Public Health Department will promptly report any confirmed cases in our jurisdiction.**

For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low. Current understanding about how the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spreads is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take precautions to avoid exposure to this virus, which are similar to the precautions you take to avoid the flu. VCPHD recommends these everyday actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying at home when you are sick.
- Covering your cough or sneeze and disposing of used tissues in the trash immediately.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using regular household cleaners that are effective against human coronavirus or influenza.

Our greatest asset to slow the spread of COVID-19 are the members of our community. The public has the power to limit the spread of this and many other diseases by following these recommendations and teaching them in their homes and workplaces.

For additional and up-to-date information please refer to:

The Victoria County Public Health Department Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/victoriacountypublichealth/>

Texas Department of State Health Services: <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>