

CEIA Coronavirus FAQs

I've been busy. Where can I learn about what the novel coronavirus is? While I'm at it, what are coronaviruses?

The World Health Organization's [Q&A page](#) on coronaviruses is a great place to get a basic background on what coronaviruses are. Next, you can review the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC")'s [page](#) to learn more about this particular outbreak of a new strain of coronavirus that is believed to have originated in China, which is now known as COVID-19.

What precautionary measures should I be taking?

It is always a good idea to promote your health by practicing good personal hygiene, particularly when you're regularly traveling on crowded airplanes or subways. These practices include:

- Frequently clean your hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- When coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a flexed elbow or tissue. Throw any tissues away immediately after using, and then wash your hands.
- Limit how often you touch your mouth, eyes, and nose.
- Avoid close contact with anyone with a fever and cough.
- Washing your hands is one of the best things you can do to avoid any virus, not just coronavirus. I know this sounds silly, but most of us don't wash our hands properly or for long enough, even though we're adults. If you'd like a refresher, enjoy this excellent [video](#) on good handwashing from The Wiggles.

Viruses are predominantly transmitted from person to person via droplets when an infected person breathes out, coughs, or sneezes. They can also spread via contaminated surfaces like door handles and tabletops. This is another great reason to make sure you're using disinfectants to clean your living and work spaces regularly.

My host institution has advised me to wear a face mask. Should I?

We are aware of at least one host institution in Asia that has advised all students to wear a face mask as a protective measure against the coronavirus. We know seeing a person wearing a face mask is rare in the United States. This makes sense in the U.S. context, as the CDC recommends only wearing one if you are ill to help prevent the spread of that illness to other people. However, wearing face masks is incredibly commonplace in many cultures. In many parts of the world, people routinely wear facemasks to prevent catching an illness.

We have also seen some reports in some cities of Asia of "public shaming" towards those who are not wearing a face mask. If you are studying in one of these cities, you may be more comfortable wearing one just to "go with the flow" of those around you. The University of South Carolina recommends that you follow your own comfort levels regarding whether to wear a face mask. If you do choose to wear one, we recommend not wearing the same one more than a few times. Most masks deteriorate after one or two wears. Using the same mask day after day is not good for your general health, as the contents of your mouth/nose eventually coat the inside of your mask and attract bacteria.

Can I still travel?

Both the U.S. Department of State's [Travel Advisory](#) and the CDC's [Travel Notice](#) are currently recommending against all unnecessary travel to China. Accordingly, many US colleges and universities now recommend against planning non-essential independent travel to China right now and have suspended all regular study abroad programming in China until Chinese university partners resume normal operations.

At present, no further international travel restrictions are in place. However, it's always a good idea to check the advisories from the [U.S Department of State](#) and the [CDC](#) before you book any travel.

What can I expect when I travel?

Some of the world's major airports have set up stations where health teams can "screen" passengers, especially those arriving on flights from China. A health screening like this might include filling out a questionnaire about your recent travels and having your temperature checked. Please cooperate with airport and health officials if you're flying through an airport with a screening station.

Where can I get verified information about the virus?

This is a new strain of a coronavirus. Therefore, there is a lot of information coming out quickly. Here is a list of sites where you can keep up with reputable, up-to-date information:

[U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[World Health Organization](#)

[European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#)

[University of South Carolina Student Health Services](#)

[WorldAware Coronavirus Hub](#)

These websites all provide information about the coronavirus, the responses of government agencies to the virus, and the steps you can take to promote your health.

CEIA is not staffed by health professionals. CEIA staff collected the above information from the same reliable resources listed above.