

## Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### What is the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

The Novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19, is a new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. It is part of a larger family of viruses called coronavirus, some of which are in circulation normally and can cause illnesses in animals or humans like the common cold. Though similar, the Novel Coronavirus is not the same strain of coronavirus as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) or Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

### How does COVID-19 spread?

According to sources such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), the virus spreads from person to person via exposure to an infected person's respiratory droplets - such as those produced when a person coughs or sneezes. Because these droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person, other people can catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from a person who is sick.

### What are the symptoms of infection with this virus?

Symptoms of the Novel Coronavirus can include fever, tiredness, dry cough or sore throat, headache, runny nose, muscle pain, and shortness of breath. Public health officials say the symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. Learn more at the [CDC's website](#).

### Is there a vaccine to protect against Novel Coronavirus?

No. There is currently no vaccine to prevent infection of the Novel Coronavirus. To read more about tips on the best way to prevent exposure to this virus and others, visit the [CDC's website](#). Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO) has developed an [online course](#) to provide general information on emerging respiratory viruses (including novel coronaviruses).

### What is the best way to prevent infection with this virus?

Both WHO and the CDC recommend some simple steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses, including, but not limited to:

- Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based 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 and then throw the tissue in the trash;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

## **Have there been cases of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus in the U.S. and the State of Georgia?**

Yes. The first confirmed case of the Novel Coronavirus in the United States was reported in January 2020, and two confirmed cases of the Novel Coronavirus were reported in the State of Georgia in March 2020. The CDC and the Fulton County Department of Health are actively engaged in closely monitoring these cases, working closely with other local, state, and federal health officials to identify other people who may have been exposed. The current case count in the U.S. is available on the [CDC website](#).

## **Are faculty, staff, and students at CAU at risk of infection with the Novel Coronavirus?**

According to national, state and local public health officials, the risk right now of infection in the United States, including Georgia, remains low. At the same time, if you have traveled to China, Japan, Italy or any other area with ongoing transmission of the virus as reported by the CDC in the last 14 days OR have had close contact (such as with a roommate or family member) who has traveled to Asia in the last four weeks, you should avoid contact with others. In all cases, you should be sure to follow the steps identified by WHO and the CDC to prevent the spread of the disease.

## **Who is at risk for infection with the 2019 Novel Coronavirus?**

Generally, people with compromised immune systems, such as pregnant women, children, and the elderly, can be at a higher risk for developing complications related to the Novel Coronavirus.

## **I think I might have the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). What do I do?**

If you think you may be experiencing symptoms of the coronavirus as of result of having traveled to China, Japan, Italy or any other area with ongoing transmission of the virus as reported by the CDC within the last 14 days OR having had contact with an infected person, you should call ahead to your health care provider and tell them about your recent travel (if applicable) and your symptoms. CAU students should follow the above advice and call the Office of Student Health Services at 404-880-8322 to explain their travel history and symptoms.

Students, staff and faculty who live off campus and are ill—no matter the cause—are encouraged to stay home and communicate by phone or email to others (i.e. professors, supervisor, etc.) to let them know they are sick.

## **What is the University doing to proactively address the situation?**

Because the health and safety of the CAU community is a top priority for the University, a Coronavirus Response Task Force, comprised of certain University administrators and officials, has been assembled to work with local, state, and federal public health officials to monitor the situation and respond appropriately. Please rely on the resources below to learn more about the Novel Coronavirus and any updates on its spread or how to stay healthy.

Additionally, the University is taking the following actions:

- Students visiting the [Office of Student Health Services](#) are being screened for recent international travel and will be asked about their health and travel history.
- Increased cleaning of high-touch surfaces and restrooms in all University buildings, including the residence halls; cleaning protocols have been expanded to ensure the Croghan Cafeteria, the residence halls, and other University facilities are clean and safe.
- Hand sanitizing stations are available to students, faculty and staff across campus.

- Daily collaboration and coordination among University officials, including our colleagues at the other Atlanta University Center Consortium (AUCC) institutions;
- The Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Dorcas Bowles, has provided additional guidance to faculty and professors regarding sensitivities around those who have been impacted by this situation.

In addition, influenza activity is high in the U.S. and expected to continue for weeks. Anyone who has not yet received a flu vaccine this season should strongly consider getting the vaccine. For students, Flu vaccines are available at the [Office of Student Health Services](#); for faculty and staff, please consult your primary health provider for additional information. Getting the flu vaccine is easy and takes about 15 minutes.

### **What is CAU doing about University-sponsored travel and study abroad programs?**

CAU is following CDC and WHO guidelines on all screening and response protocols, which are hailed as the national and international standard. While screening protocols based on these guidelines are in place at airports across the world to identify those who are ill and prevent them from traveling, guidelines from the CDC and WHO do not include screening the general public, or restricting travel within the United States. At this time, out of an abundance of caution, CAU is following the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) travel advisory and recommends against all nonessential travel to China, Japan, Italy or any other area with ongoing transmission of the virus as reported by the CDC. To check the current CDC travel recommendations visit the [CDC website](#).

### **Should I still go to class/my activities?**

Currently, there are no restrictions on academic, operational, or extracurricular activities at CAU. National, state and local public health officials deem the risk of Novel Coronavirus to the public to be low; however, there are precautions we can take to prevent the spread of all communicable diseases at CAU. The University is maintaining normal operations, and all classes and events will be held as scheduled. If you are feeling ill, please communicate with your professors who have been advised to maintain flexibility when excusing students from class for medical reasons.

### **I am experiencing increased stress and anxiety related to the Novel Coronavirus. Where should I seek help?**

News reporting about emerging illnesses can be upsetting for many to hear. If you are a CAU student experiencing increased anxiety or stress related to the Novel Coronavirus, or concerns for friends/family, please contact the Office of Counseling and Disability Services at 404-880-8044 to set up an appointment with a counselor. For faculty and staff, if you are concerned about a student's well-being, please contact the Office of Student Services and Campus Life at 404-880-8040. We're here to help.

### **Are there any other resources I can consult which educates the public about the disease and how to prevent its spread?**

Yes. The following public health organization websites are available for public consumption and appear to be routinely updated as more information about the disease comes available.

- [World Health Organization \(WHO\) – Coronavirus Page](#)
- [U.S. Department of State](#) (for travel advisories)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) - Coronavirus](#)
- [Georgia Department of Public Health \(GDPH\)](#)