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## **UMS\_COVID-19 Announcements\_Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information University of Maine System**

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## UMS Community Guidance

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## Public Health Resources

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## Announcements

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- Pass/Fail Options Extended At UMS Universities  
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- University UMS COVID-19 Directives prohibit non-essential university air travel, opens residence halls for spring break, sets March 23 deadline for continuity of instruction planning  
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- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information University of Maine System  
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- Students and Employees Urged to Update Emergency Contact Information  
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- UMS Guidance for International Travelers  
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- Governor Mills Convenes Coronavirus Response Team  
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- Travel Monitoring and Prohibitions: University Travel to Italy Prohibited  
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- We're Making Plans to be Ready for Coronavirus  
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# Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information

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MAR 2020

The University of Maine System in consultation and communication with the Maine Center for Disease Control and additional experts is actively monitoring the outbreak of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). As of March 8, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 at any UMS institution or in Maine. This page contains resources and communications designed to raise awareness of prevention and preparedness efforts at UMS. This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available.

**What is The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)?** Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Many of them infect animals, but some coronaviruses from animals can evolve (change) into a new human coronavirus that can spread from person-to-person. This is what happened with the current novel coronavirus known as COVID-19. Diseases from coronaviruses in people typically cause mild to moderate illness, like the common cold. Some, like the SARS or MERS viruses, cause serious infections like pneumonia.

**How does COVID-19 spread?** Like other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, human coronaviruses most commonly spread to others from an infected person who has symptoms through:

- Through droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands (but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads)

We are learning more each day about how this virus spreads and how long it takes for people to become sick. As information becomes available, we will keep you informed.

**What prevention measures should be taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19?** There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. As with other respiratory illnesses, there are steps that everyone can take daily to reduce the risk of getting sick or infecting others with circulating viruses.

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Help young children do the same.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limit close contact, like kissing and sharing cups or utensils, with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands).
- Get a flu shot – it's not too late to be protected against influenza.

**Who should wear facemasks?** Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility). The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from COVID-19.

**What are the symptoms of COVID-19?** Information to date suggests this virus is causing symptoms consistent with a respiratory illness such as cough, fever, and shortness of breath. If a person has traveled from an area with ongoing spread and develops any of these symptoms within 14 days of their return, they should seek medical care right away. They should first call the doctor's office or emergency room and tell them about their symptoms and recent travel.

**What should I do if I am ill?** There is no specific treatment for illness caused by the novel coronavirus. However, many of the symptoms can be treated. Treatment is based on the patient's condition. There is currently no vaccine to prevent novel coronavirus. Be aware of scam products for sale that make false claims to prevent or treat this new infection.

Call your healthcare provider if you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently traveled to an area with ongoing spread. Tell your healthcare provider about your recent travel or contact. Your healthcare provider will work with the Maine Center for Disease Control to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

- Stay home except to get medical care
- Call ahead before visiting your doctor
- Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home
- Wear a facemask
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Follow procedures outlined at your doctor's office
- Avoid sharing personal household items such as dishes and towels
- Clean your hands often
- Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day

**UMS employee information** UMS has flexible and non-punitive leave policies for students and staff affected by COVID-19.

- Employees are encouraged to stay home if when ill and to leave work if they become ill
- Employees may stay home and, if feasible, work remotely when sick or caring for sick household members. Employees should discuss remote work arrangements with their supervisor.
- UMS will continue to monitor state and federal agency guidance and adjust work and leave practices as appropriate. In the meantime, information regarding paid leave and Family Medical Leave (FML) can be found at on the [my campus benefits page](#).
- Continue to encourage welcoming environments for ALL members of our community.

**Do campus events need to be canceled?** If you are sick, stay home from events. At this time, there is no requirement to cancel school or social events. At this time, there are no restrictions on public gatherings. Event planners should develop backup plans, consider how to incorporate social distancing, and other types of pivoting as regional confirmed case numbers increase. All members of our community should be prepared to adjust if restrictions on gatherings are adopted and implemented.

**How will I be informed if there is a case on campus?** It is recommended to update information regarding emergency notifications in your emergency alerts profile. Follow [this link for instructions](#). Updates will be posted on the University of Maine System [health advisory site](#) and through other applicable communication channels such as email.

**Travelers returning from mainland China and other infected regions** To slow the spread of COVID-19 into the United States, the CDC is working with public health partners to implement new travel procedures announced in a Presidential Proclamation on Novel Coronavirus. In summary:

- Travelers returning to the US from countries with a Level 3 Travel Health Notice (Currently China, Iran, Italy and South Korea) will be asked to stay home for a period of 14 days from the time you left an area with widespread or ongoing community spread
- Foreign nationals who have visited China in the past 14 days may not enter the United States
- American citizens, lawful permanent residents, and their families who have been in China in the past 14 days will be allowed to enter the United States, but will be redirected to one of 11 airports to undergo health screening. Depending on their health and travel history, they will have some level of restrictions on their movements for 14 days from the time they left China.
- The University has a variety of information available specifically regarding travel and travelers. Please review the March 5, 2020 [UMS COVID-19 Guidance on University Travel for Business and Personal Travel](#) for more information about both official and personal travel.

### References

- [CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for College and Universities](#)