



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Community Surveillance FAQs

What actions are CDC and the Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH) taking to detect community spread of COVID-19 in the United States?

CDC and its public health partners, including HDOH, will begin surveillance to see if there is community transmission of COVID-19 in Hawaii. Patients who are seen by their doctors with flu-like symptoms will have respiratory specimens collected. If you test negative for flu, your specimen **may or may not** be randomly selected to be tested for COVID-19 infection as part of community surveillance. Having a specimen collected does not guarantee testing for COVID-19. Testing of selected specimens will be done by the State Laboratories Division in Hawaii.

What do I need to know about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that can infect humans and animals. COVID-19 (formerly called "2019 Novel Coronavirus," abbreviated as "2019-nCoV") is a new respiratory virus from this group that was first identified in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, in Hubei Province in December 2019. It has since spread to other cities across China as well as over 75 other countries, including the United States. On January 30, 2020, the WHO declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

Is COVID-19 a danger in Hawaii?

Although the immediate risk to the general public in Hawaii is currently low, at some point there may be cases identified here. The goal of the United States and Hawaii public health response is to detect new cases quickly, understand where COVID-19 occurs and why, and prevent the spread of this disease. Imported cases of COVID-19 have been detected in the United States, and community spread of COVID-19 is occurring in several states. We are conducting this surveillance to understand whether the infection is currently spreading in our community.

What can I do to protect myself and others from respiratory infections like COVID-19?

It is important to know and practice preventive measures to reduce the risk of getting sick or infecting others. You should practice frequent handwashing with soap and water for 20 seconds or with alcohol-based hand sanitizers to prevent the spread of respiratory infections like COVID-19. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Stay at home when you are sick to keep from infecting others.

What happens if my specimen is selected for COVID-19 testing through community surveillance?

If your specimen is randomly selected to be tested for COVID-19 at Hawaii's public health laboratory, your information will be kept confidential. You and your physician will be notified and provided further guidance by HDOH if you test positive for COVID-19.

For more information, visit the HDOH website:

<https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/novel-coronavirus-2019/>

or the CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>