

NEED MORE INFORMATION ON -COVID-19

If you're searching for more information about **coronavirus** (COVID-19) that has affected thousands, the Houston health department is setting up a call center to help answer your questions.

The health department says the call center will be available starting Monday.

Anyone with questions will be able to call in on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. They will also be returning voice messages left after hours on the following day.

Citizens can call the center at 832-393-4220 (Houston) and talk to department staff to obtain information about the virus. We have not been notified of other call centers.

While COVID-19 is a new respiratory virus, these are some daily precautions recommended by the Houston health department to prevent respiratory illnesses are the same:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer when you can't wash your hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue away. If you don't have a tissue, use the elbow of your sleeve
- Don't use your hands to cover coughs and sneezes
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when you are sick and keep children home when they are sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Get a flu shot. (Although the flu shot does not protect against COVID-19, it is flu season.)
- People who recently returned to the United States from international travel need to monitor for fever, cough and difficulty breathing for at least 14 days and seek medical care right away if they develop symptoms. Before going to a doctor's office or emergency room, symptomatic people with a history of international travel must call ahead to tell the healthcare professionals about their recent travel and symptoms.

Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- Respiratory droplets released into the air by coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands
- Houstonians may visit HoustonEmergency.org for updated information about local risk, routine protective actions, frequently asked questions, communication resources, rumor control, emergency preparedness tips and more.