Dear UW-River Falls students,

We hope your first week of classes has gone well and that you are enjoying the truly spring-like weather. As communicated last week, the Student Health and Counseling Office will regularly share timely reminders and important updates regarding the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Since we are in the midst of flu season, you can look forward to general health and wellness recommendations as well.

A comprehensive list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) is now available for reference on the Student Health and Counseling Office webpage. This resource is updated regularly and includes a breadth of information from travel warnings to health and wellness recommendations.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), UW Hospital and Clinics, the local health department, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have confirmed the first case of 2019 novel coronavirus in Wisconsin, in the Madison area. The case was confirmed at the CDC. The immediate health risk to the general public for contracting this virus is low. The patient is an adult with a history of travel to Beijing, China prior to becoming ill and was exposed to known cases while in China. The individual is isolated at home, and is doing well. Out of respect for the privacy of the patient and their household, this is the only information that is available.

It is important to know that there have been no changes to the recommendations for campus at this time. There are no suspected or reported cases of the coronavirus on campus and we remain unaware of any UW-River Falls personnel or students who have been exposed to the virus. We are continuously monitoring the situation and are staying in regular contact with our local, county and state health officials and following the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and other public health officials.

We encourage you to familiarize yourself with preventive wellness efforts to avoid this and other viruses. These include:

- 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.
- 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.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Be sure to review UWRF absence policies if you are unable to attend class.

The risk in the U.S. for the 2019 novel coronavirus remains low. You are much more likely to be at risk for influenza which is why we continue to recommend preventive measures (see above), including getting a flu shot.

If you do have influenza-like symptoms, contact your primary care provider or Vibrant Health Family Clinics in River Falls (VHFC) and share any recent travel history or possible exposure. Certain clinical health services such as basic office visits and influenza vaccines are covered by Student Health Services for current UWRF students. Students should call ahead for an appointment at 715-425-6701. The River Falls Taxi is available for transportation to appointments at VHFC at no charge, and that number is 715-425-7878.
More answers to questions related to the coronavirus and influenza can be found at [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov). Clarifying questions can be directed to Student Health and Counseling at 715-425-3293. Information is also posted on the Student Health and Counseling webpage. The [Office of International Education](https://www.uwrf.edu/international) is available to assist with any questions regarding travel to and from southeast Asia and other global locations.

We ask that, as a community, we support each other and never make assumptions due to anyone’s national origin or their recent travel. Remember that we are a community of respect, care and support where all members are celebrated and welcomed.

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