

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

### ABOUT COVID-19

#### What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing respiratory illness in people and others circulating among animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread between people. Previous coronavirus outbreaks have included severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believes the risk to the American public of becoming infected with this novel coronavirus is currently low. Because this is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, the CDC will provide updated information as it becomes available, including any changes in the risk assessment.

#### How does it spread?

Although we have a lot to learn about this virus, it is currently believed that it spreads like other respiratory viruses- by people with the infection coughing and sneezing. These droplets are inhaled by other people or moved to the eyes, nose or mouth by contaminated hands.

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

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include the following:

- Fever
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

If you have returned in the past 14 days from travel to a country with a COVID-19 outbreak OR have been exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19 AND are experiencing fever and respiratory symptoms (such as fever with coughing or difficulty breathing/shortness of breath), the CDC advises you to **seek medical advice and call ahead to your health-care provider or nurse advice line. For Averett University students please call Residence Life on Call at 434-203-7245 before calling a healthcare provider or before going to a clinic, urgent care, emergency room or other health facility.** Your provider will need to take special measures to protect other people in the clinic. Telemedicine may also be available, enabling you to consult a provider from home.

Additionally, if you have **NOT** returned in the past 14 days from travel to a country with a COVID-19 outbreak OR have **NOT** been exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19, but do have fever and respiratory symptoms **seek medical advice and call ahead to your health-care provider or nurse advice line. For Averett University students please call Residence Life on Call at 434-203-7245 before calling a healthcare provider or before going to a clinic, urgent care, emergency room or other health facility.** Your provider will need to take special measures to protect other people in the clinic. Telemedicine may also be available, enabling you to consult a provider from home.

### **I feel anxious about coronavirus. What can I do?**

We understand that some community members are concerned. Remember that according to our state and local health departments, the risk to the Averett community and to the U.S. population as a whole is currently low. If you would like to talk with someone, support is available to students through campus mental health services:

- *Counseling Center:* (434) 791-5624
- *Dean of Students:* (434) 791-5620
- *Student Success Center:* (434) 791-5754
- *Director of Human Resources:* (434) 791-7106

You can help prevent the spread of colds and other viral ailments by doing the following:

- Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and immediately dispose of the tissue.
- Wash your hands often and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched.

### **Where can I get more information about the coronavirus?**

For current information about this evolving public health situation, visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [2019 Novel Coronavirus](#) page.

Virginia Department of Health: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>

## **HEALTH, WELLNESS AND PREVENTION**

### **What do I do if I feel sick?**

If you develop symptoms — such as a fever, cough or shortness of breath — within 14 days of your return from personal or official travel to a country with a COVID-19 outbreak (*China, South Korea, Italy, Iran, and Japan*) OR have been exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19, please take the steps listed below.

Additionally, if you have **NOT** returned in the past 14 days from travel to a country with a COVID-19 outbreak OR have **NOT** been exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19 but do have fever and respiratory symptoms, please also take the following steps.

**First:** Call your health provider in advance. **Please do not show up at a clinic, urgent care or other health facility without calling first.** Your provider will need to take special measures to protect other people in the clinic. Telemedicine may also be available, enabling you to consult a provider from home. **If you are an Averett University student have please contact Residence Life on Call (434) 203-7245 and we will assist you. Do not show up at a clinic, urgent care or other health facility without calling first. Trained professional staff is available 24/7 and can answer your questions and assist you with next steps.**

**Second:** Check in with the following AU contacts for symptom monitoring and tracking of COVID-19-related travel among AU community members.

- *Dean of Students (Averett University students): (434) 791-5620*
- *Director of Human Resources(Averett University employees): (434) 791-7106*

We also recommend that anyone returning from a country with a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Travel Notice check in with the secondary AU contacts, even if you have mild or no symptoms.

As noted previously, if you are returning from a country with a COVID-19 outbreak, please also check in with these contacts and stay home for 14 days.

**The CDC also advises you to:**

- Avoid contact with others and do not travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Clean your hands by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol immediately after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.

**Monitor your symptoms closely.** Remember that the likelihood is low that you have coronavirus. Take your temperature if you believe you have a fever.

**Stay home from school and work** until at least 24 hours after your fever ends. If you must go out of the house or be around others, wear a mask and avoid close contact. Be especially careful around infants and small children as well as people who have compromised immune systems and/or are over the age of 65. If you returned from China in the last 14 days, and your arrival date was February 2 or later, you will have received instructions from the CDC and from the local or state health department. Please follow these instructions. Guidelines for travelers returning from other countries are available from the CDC.

**Take care of yourself.** Rest as much as possible. Drink lots of fluids.

### **Should I wear a mask?**

Public health agencies currently **do not recommend that people wear masks when they are in public.** This is because the immediate health risk to the general public in Virginia is currently low. Additionally, scientists are not sure whether wearing a mask in public actually keeps healthy people from getting sick. It's most important for people who are sick to wear a mask in a healthcare setting (such as a waiting room) to avoid exposing other people when they cough or sneeze.

In some parts of the world, mask use is customary. People wear masks often for a variety of reasons, including to avoid pollen and air pollution, as a courtesy to others when they have the common cold, and for other cultural and even social reasons.

However, keep in mind that if we see our friends, neighbors or other community members wearing a mask we **should not assume** that they have been exposed to coronavirus or any other illness (coronavirus is not currently present in our community). Because mask use is customary in some cultures, it's not appropriate to make assumptions about why someone is wearing a mask or to stigmatize or discriminate against people who choose to wear masks.

## UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

### **Will Averett cancel classes?**

There are currently no plans to cancel classes due to the low risk to the AU community.

### **If this outbreak continues, will the University close? What happens if I live on campus?**

We understand some members of our community have concerns about measures that may need to be taken by Averett in the event of widespread local, regional or national transmission of COVID-19. The University has extensive and thorough emergency procedures, and is committed to doing everything it can to ensure the health and safety of our community.

Because this is a rapidly changing situation and we are learning more about COVID-19 and how it is transmitted every day, we need to prepare for a range of possibilities, from suspending some operations and some large events, to moving classes online, to a full suspension of classes.

In the event that a quarantine involving students becomes necessary, we are preparing for a multi-faceted response that would include providing food service and/or moving students off-campus or to sequestered areas of the residence halls. In the event many cases are diagnosed, those who could safely leave the campus would be encouraged to do so, thereby increasing our capacity to assist others who are unable to travel.

As a reminder, the University is coordinating closely with county public health agencies and the Virginia Department of Health on its response, including contingency planning, and will continue to do so.

### **I'm hosting an event on campus. Should I cancel it?**

There are no restrictions on campus events at this time. Take precautions you would normally take to help prevent the spread of colds and viruses during flu season and remind attendees of these precautions. If possible, as part of event logistics, consider making it possible for people to participate remotely in the event that the situation changes.

## CLASSES AND ACADEMICS FOR STUDENTS

### **When should students consider staying home from class?**

The University continues to maintain normal operations due to the low risk to the AU community. If you are sick, you should take steps you normally would when sick, including focusing on caring for your health, contacting your healthcare provider if you feel you need to, not attending class if contagious, and in the event you miss class due to illness, working with your instructor on any necessary arrangements for making up coursework.

## **CLASSES AND ACADEMICS FOR FACULTY AND OTHER ACADEMIC PERSONNEL**

### **How should faculty and other academic personnel prepare for the possibility of class disruptions?**

Currently there are no plans to cancel classes due to the low risk to the AU community. However, in the same way that it is wise to keep emergency kits ready in case you need them, this is a good time to think about preparing for any situation that could disrupt class schedules.

Just as they would during a major weather event or natural disaster, your students will face the same stresses during a public health emergency as do many other community members, such as child care challenges and uncertain work schedules. Consider what aspects of your course are most essential so you can plan to refocus on those elements in the event that completing all missed work becomes impossible or unreasonable.

### **How should faculty and other academic personnel work with student requests to stay home from class?**

Please be prepared to accommodate students who are requesting to stay home due to illness, as described in the preceding question, including clearly communicating opportunities and expectations around alternative assignments or makeup work.

### **Should faculty and other academic personnel ask students returning to class following an illness to provide documentation or physician's note?**

“Instructors are strongly discouraged from requiring medical or legal documentation from a student for any absences. Requiring such documentation places burdens on all parties involved. Because we are in the middle of the cold and flu season, many students may be absent due to illness. The syllabus guidelines recommend that instructors offer students accommodations, such as makeup exams, alternate assignments, or alternate weighting of missed work.