

FEATURE

Coronavirus Outbreak Timeline Fast Facts

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Here's some information about the spread of the coronavirus outbreak, declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. The coronavirus, called Covid-19 by the WHO, originated in China and is the cousin of the SARS virus.

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that are common among animals. The viruses can make people sick, usually with a mild to moderate upper respiratory tract illness, similar to a common cold. Coronavirus symptoms include a runny nose, cough, sore throat, possibly a headache and maybe a fever, which can last for a couple of days.

Timeline

December 31, 2019 – Cases of pneumonia detected in Wuhan, China, [are first reported to the WHO](#). During this reported period, the virus is unknown. The cases [occur between December 12 and December 29](#), according to Wuhan Municipal Health.

January 1, 2020 – Chinese health authorities close the [Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market](#) after it is discovered that wild animals sold there may be the source of the virus.

January 5, 2020 – China announces that the unknown pneumonia cases in Wuhan are not SARS or MERS. In a [statement](#), the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission says a retrospective probe into the outbreak has been initiated.

January 7, 2020 – Chinese authorities confirm that they have identified the virus as a novel coronavirus, initially named [2019-nCoV](#) by the WHO.

January 11, 2020 – The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission announces the first death caused by the coronavirus. A 61-year-old man, exposed to the virus at the seafood market, died on January 9 after respiratory failure caused by severe pneumonia.

January 13, 2020 – Thai authorities [report a case of infection caused by the coronavirus](#). The infected individual is a Chinese national who had arrived from Wuhan.

January 16, 2020 – Japanese authorities confirm that [a Japanese man who traveled to Wuhan is infected with the virus](#).

January 17, 2020 – Chinese health officials confirm that a second person has died in China. The United States responds to the outbreak by implementing screenings for symptoms at [airports in San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles](#).

January 20, 2020 – China reports 139 new cases of the sickness, including a third death.

January 20, 2020 – [The National Institutes of Health announces that it is working on a vaccine against the coronavirus](#). “The NIH is in the process of taking the first steps towards the development of a vaccine,” says Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

January 21, 2020 – [Officials in Washington state confirm the first case on US soil](#).

January 22, 2020 – Wuhan says it will “temporarily” close its airport and railway stations for departing passengers following news that the death toll from the Wuhan Coronavirus

has risen to 17. Chinese authorities confirm at least 547 cases in the mainland.

January 23, 2020 – At an emergency committee convened by the World Health Organization, [the WHO says that the Wuhan coronavirus does not yet constitute a public health emergency of international concern](#).

January 23, 2020 – The Beijing Culture and Tourism Bureau cancels all large-scale [Lunar New Year](#) celebrations in an effort to contain the growing spread of Wuhan coronavirus. On the same day, Chinese authorities enforce a partial lockdown of transport in and out of Wuhan. Authorities in the nearby cities of Huanggang and Ezhou Huanggang announce a series of similar measures.

January 26, 2020 – [The China Association of Travel Services reports that all tours, including international ones, will be suspended](#).

January 28, 2020 – Chinese President Xi Jinping [meets with WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom in Beijing](#). At the meeting, Xi and the WHO agree to send a team of international experts, including US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention staff, to China to investigate the coronavirus outbreak.

January 29, 2020 – The White House announces the formation of a new [task force](#) that will help monitor and contain the spread of the virus, and ensure Americans have accurate and up-to-date health and travel information, it says.

January 30, 2020 – [The United States reports its first confirmed case of person-to-person transmission of the Wuhan coronavirus](#). On the same day, the WHO determines that the outbreak constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

January 31, 2020 – The [Donald Trump](#) administration announces it will [deny entry to foreign nationals](#) who have traveled in China in the last 14 days.

February 2, 2020 – A man in the Philippines dies from the Wuhan coronavirus — [the first time a death has been reported outside mainland China since the outbreak began](#).

February 3, 2020 – [China's Foreign Ministry accuses the US government of inappropriately reacting to the outbreak and spreading fear by enforcing travel restrictions](#).

February 4, 2020 – [The Japanese Health Ministry announces that ten people aboard the Diamond Princess cruise ship moored in Yokohama Bay are confirmed to have the coronavirus](#). The ship, which is carrying more than 3,700 people, is placed under quarantine scheduled to end on February 19.

February 7, 2020 – Li Wenliang, [a Wuhan doctor](#) who was [targeted by police](#) for trying to sound the alarm on a “SARS-like” virus in December, dies of the coronavirus. Following news of Li’s death, the topics “Wuhan government owes Dr. Li Wenliang an apology,” and “We want freedom of speech,” [trend on China's Twitter-like platform, Weibo, before disappearing from the heavily censored platform](#).

February 8, 2020 – The US Embassy in Beijing confirms that a [60-year-old US national died in Wuhan on February 6, marking the first confirmed death of a foreigner](#).

February 10, 2020 – Xi inspects efforts to contain the Wuhan coronavirus in Beijing, [the first time he has appeared on the front lines of the fight against the outbreak](#). On the same day, a team of international experts from WHO arrives in China to assist with containing the coronavirus outbreak.

February 10, 2020 – The Anthem of the Seas, a Royal Caribbean cruise ship, sets sail from Bayonne, New Jersey, after a coronavirus scare [had kept it docked and its passengers waiting for days](#).

February 11, 2020 – [The WHO names the coronavirus Covid-19](#).

February 13, 2020 – China’s state-run Xinhua News Agency announces that [Shanghai mayor Ying Yong will be replacing Jiang Chaoliang amid the outbreak](#). Wuhan Communist Party chief Ma Guoqiang has also been replaced by Wang Zhonglin, party chief of Jinan city in Shandong province, according to Xinhua.

February 14, 2020 – A Chinese tourist who tested positive for the virus dies in France, becoming the first person to die in the outbreak in Europe.

February 14, 2020 – Egypt announces its first case of Wuhan coronavirus on Friday, [according to a joint statement by Egypt’s Ministry of Health and the WHO](#). The confirmed case marks the first in Africa since the virus was detected.

February 15, 2020 – The official Communist Party journal [Qiushi](#) publishes the transcript of a speech made on February 3 by Xi in which he “issued requirements for the prevention and control of the new coronavirus” on January 7, [revealing Xi knew about and was directing the response to the virus on almost two weeks before he commented on it publicly](#).

February 18, 2020 – Xi says in a phone call with British Prime Minister [Boris Johnson](#) that China’s measures to prevent and control the epidemic “[are achieving visible progress](#),” according to state news Xinhua.

February 19, 2020 – Passengers who have tested negative for the novel coronavirus begin disembarking from the stricken Diamond Princess cruise ship, [despite mounting evidence from infectious disease experts they could unknowingly be carrying the virus back into their communities](#).

February 21, 2020 – The CDC changes criteria for counting confirmed cases of novel coronavirus in the United States and begins tracking two separate and distinct groups: [those repatriated by the US Department of State and those identified by the US public health network](#).

February 25, 2020 – [The NIH announces](#) that a clinical trial to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of the antiviral drug remdesivir in adults diagnosed with coronavirus [has started at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha](#). The first participant is an American who was evacuated from the Diamond Princess cruise ship docked in Japan.

February 25, 2020 – In an effort to contain the largest outbreak in Europe, Italy’s Lombardy region press office [issues a list](#) of towns and villages that are in complete lockdown. [Around 100,000 people are affected by the travel restrictions](#).

February 26, 2020 – [CDC officials say that a California patient being treated for novel coronavirus is the first US case of unknown origin](#). The patient, who didn’t have any relevant travel history nor exposure to another known patient, is the first possible US case of “[community spread](#).”

February 26, 2020 – [President Trump](#) places [Vice President Mike Pence in charge of the US government response to the novel coronavirus](#), amid growing criticism of the White House’s handling of the outbreak.

February 29, 2020 – A state health official announces that a patient infected with the novel coronavirus in Washington state has died, [marking the first death due to the virus in the United States](#). [Washington Gov. Jay Inslee](#) declares a state of emergency, directing state agencies to use all resources necessary to respond to the outbreak.

March 1, 2020 – Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis declares a public health emergency in the state of Florida. [Over the next several days, Kentucky, New York, Maryland, Utah and Oregon declare states of emergency](#).

March 3, 2020 – [The Federal Reserve slashes interest rates by half a percentage point in an attempt to give the US economy a jolt in the face of concerns about the coronavirus outbreak](#). It is the first unscheduled, emergency rate cut since

2008, and it also marks the biggest one-time cut since then.

March 3, 2020 – [Officials announce that Iran will temporarily release 54,000 people from prisons and deploy hundreds of thousands of health workers as officials announced a slew of measures to contain the world's deadliest coronavirus outbreak outside China.](#) It is also announced that 23 members of Iran's parliament tested positive for the virus.

March 4, 2020 – The CDC formally [removes earlier restrictions that limited coronavirus testing of the general public to people in the hospital](#), unless they had close contact with confirmed coronavirus cases. According to the CDC, clinicians should now “use their judgment to determine if a patient has signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and whether the patient should be tested.”

March 8, 2020 – Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte signs a decree placing travel restrictions on the entire Lombardy region and 14 other provinces, [restricting the movements of more than 10 million people in the northern part of the country.](#)

March 9, 2020 – [Conte announces that the whole country of Italy is on lockdown.](#)

March 11, 2020 – [The WHO declares the novel coronavirus outbreak to be a pandemic. WHO says the outbreak is the first pandemic caused by a coronavirus.](#)

March 11, 2020 – In an Oval Office address, [Trump announces that he is restricting travel](#)

[from Europe to the United States for 30 days in an attempt to slow the spread of coronavirus.](#) The ban, which applies to the 26 countries in the Schengen Area, applies only to foreign nationals and not American citizens and permanent residents who'd be screened before entering the country.

March 13, 2020 – [Trump declares a national emergency to free up \\$50 billion in federal resources to combat coronavirus.](#)

March 18, 2020 – [Trump signs into law a coronavirus relief package](#) that includes provisions for free testing for Covid-19 and paid emergency leave.

March 19, 2020 – At a news conference, officials from China's National Health Commission report [no new locally transmitted coronavirus cases for the first time since the pandemic began.](#)

March 23, 2020 – [United Nations](#) Secretary-General António Guterres calls for an immediate global ceasefire amid the pandemic to [fight “the common enemy.”](#)

March 24, 2020 – [Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe](#) and International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach [agree to postpone the Olympics](#) until 2021 amid the outbreak.

March 25, 2020 – The White House and Senate leaders reach an agreement on a [\\$2 trillion stimulus deal](#) to offset the economic damage of coronavirus, producing one of the most expensive and far-reaching measures in the history of Congress.