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#### Mission Statement

Good health is basic to the enjoyment of a full and productive life. Our mission is to provide the best possible opportunity for good health to the

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# Issues on Preparedness

## Coronaviruses-What are they, and how do they spread?

By: **Shelia Ellison, L.V.N.**

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). A “novel” coronavirus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people. Detailed investigations found that SARS-CoV was transmitted from civet cats to humans and MERS-CoV from dromedary camels to humans. Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans.

Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

Standard recommendations to prevent the spread of infection include:

- regular hand washing
- covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing
- avoiding close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Stay home if you are sick

A new coronavirus emerged from Wuhan, China, in December of 2019 and is currently referred to as the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19. There are cases of the 2019-nCoV reported in the United States and in Texas at this time.

We are still learning how this disease affects people, but it appears the elderly and those with underlying health conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease are at greater risk for developing severe disease. At this time, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the risk to the general public is LOW.

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 is an emerging and rapidly evolving situation. For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).



## Influenza in Texas: A look at the flu season so far...

Flu season usually begins in October and can last as late as May, with February being the peak month for reported illness.

The State of Texas participates in influenza surveillance by reporting the estimated level of influenza activity to the CDC every week during influenza season. Influenza activity levels are reported as no activity, sporadic, local, regional, or widespread.

There are 11 Health Service Regions in Texas. The Infectious Disease Control Unit (IDCU) of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), in cooperation with the DSHS Medical Virology Laboratory, monitors influenza around the state. Each season, local and regional health departments recruit providers throughout Texas to participate in laboratory surveillance. Health care providers at participating sites collect and submit specimens from patients with influenza symptoms to the DSHS Lab on a weekly basis during influenza season.

The CDC estimates that so far this season there have been at least 22 million flu illnesses, 210,000 hospitalizations and 12,000 deaths from flu.

Nationally, and in some regions, the proportion of influenza A (H1N1) pdm09 viruses compared to influenza B viruses is increasing.

The predominant virus also varies by age group. Nationally, for the season overall, influenza B viruses are the most commonly reported influenza viruses among children and young adults age 0-4 years (56% of reported viruses) and 5-24 years (73% of reported viruses), while A (H1N1) pdm09 viruses are the most commonly reported influenza viruses among persons 25-64 years (53% of reported viruses) and 65 years of age and older (60% of reported viruses). For this season, 52% of influenza positive specimens reported by public health laboratories were among persons less than 25 years of age and less than 13% were from person age 65 and older.

Overall, hospitalization rates remain similar to this time during recent seasons, but rates among children and young adults are higher at this time than in recent seasons.

Pneumonia and influenza mortality has been low, but 78 influenza-associated deaths in children have been reported so far this season.

Flu vaccine effectiveness estimates will be available later this month, but vaccination is always the best way to prevent flu and its potentially serious complications.

Antiviral medications are an important adjunct to flu vaccine in the control of influenza. >99% of the influenza viruses tested this season are susceptible to the four FDA-approved influenza antiviral medications recommended for use in the U.S. this season.

For more information on influenza visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or [www.dshs.state.us/influenza](http://www.dshs.state.us/influenza).

## Food, Fun and ...Rattlesnakes! The 62nd Annual Rattlesnake Roundup is Soon Approaching!

What began in 1958 as a way to rid the city and area of rattlesnakes, has grown into a yearly time of great food, family entertainment and education. The 62nd Annual Rattlesnake Roundup will kick off on Thursday March, 12th and will end on Sunday, March 15th. During the four day event, there will be lots fun, starting with the Rattlesnake Parade which begins 4:30 p.m. Thursday. The parade will follow the route from West Broadway and then down Elm street and end at the Newman Park. The Miss Snake Charmer Pageant will be Thursday night, starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Sweetwater Municipal Auditorium, located at 201 East 4th street. Tickets for the pageant are \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for students. On Friday, March 13th, at 8:00 a.m. the doors to the round up open to the public.

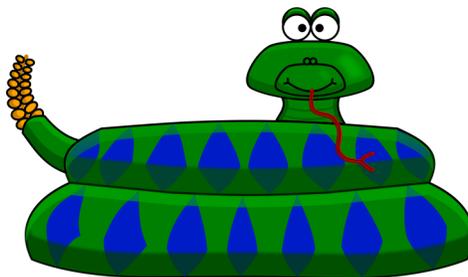
For the food lovers out there, many vendors will be set up to offer goodies such as roasted corn, bbq turkey legs, and fried rattlesnake! The annual cook off will be held in Newman Park, within walking distance of the coliseum and there you will find brisket, ribs, chicken and chili!

For the kiddos, there is a carnival that is open daily during the event. Tickets for the rides are \$1.00 each or you can buy a wristband for \$30.00 that is good all day. A weekend pass (sold only on Thursday and is only good for the Carnival) is \$60.00.

There will also be a knife and coin show and many snake eating contest, guided hunts and much more to enjoy.

On average, the Roundup attracts around 30,000 visitors each year and brings in around 8.4 million dollars to the local economy.

Food vendors will need to be inspected by the Sweetwater Nolan County Health Department before selling food to the public. Applications for temporary food permits may be picked up at the Sweetwater Nolan County Health Department or found on our website at [www.nolancountyhealth.com](http://www.nolancountyhealth.com) under environmental health.



## Are You Prepared For An Emergency?



*“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail”-Benjamin Franklin*

Through its *Ready* Campaign, the Federal Emergency Management Agency educates and empowers Americans to take some simple steps to prepare for and respond to potential emergencies, including natural disasters and terroristic attacks. **Ready** asks individuals to do three key things:

- get an emergency supply kit
- Make a family emergency plan
- Be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses.

This is a recommended list of items to include in a basic emergency supply kit:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation.
- Food, at least a three day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries.
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Can opener for food (if food contains canned food)
- Local maps

Additional items to consider would be prescription medications and glasses, infant formula and diapers, pet food and extra water for your pet, cash or travelers checks, sleeping bags and warm blankets for each member of the family, matches in a waterproof container, feminine supplies and personal hygiene items and books, games and puzzles.

For more information on how you can be prepared in the event of a disaster, visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)