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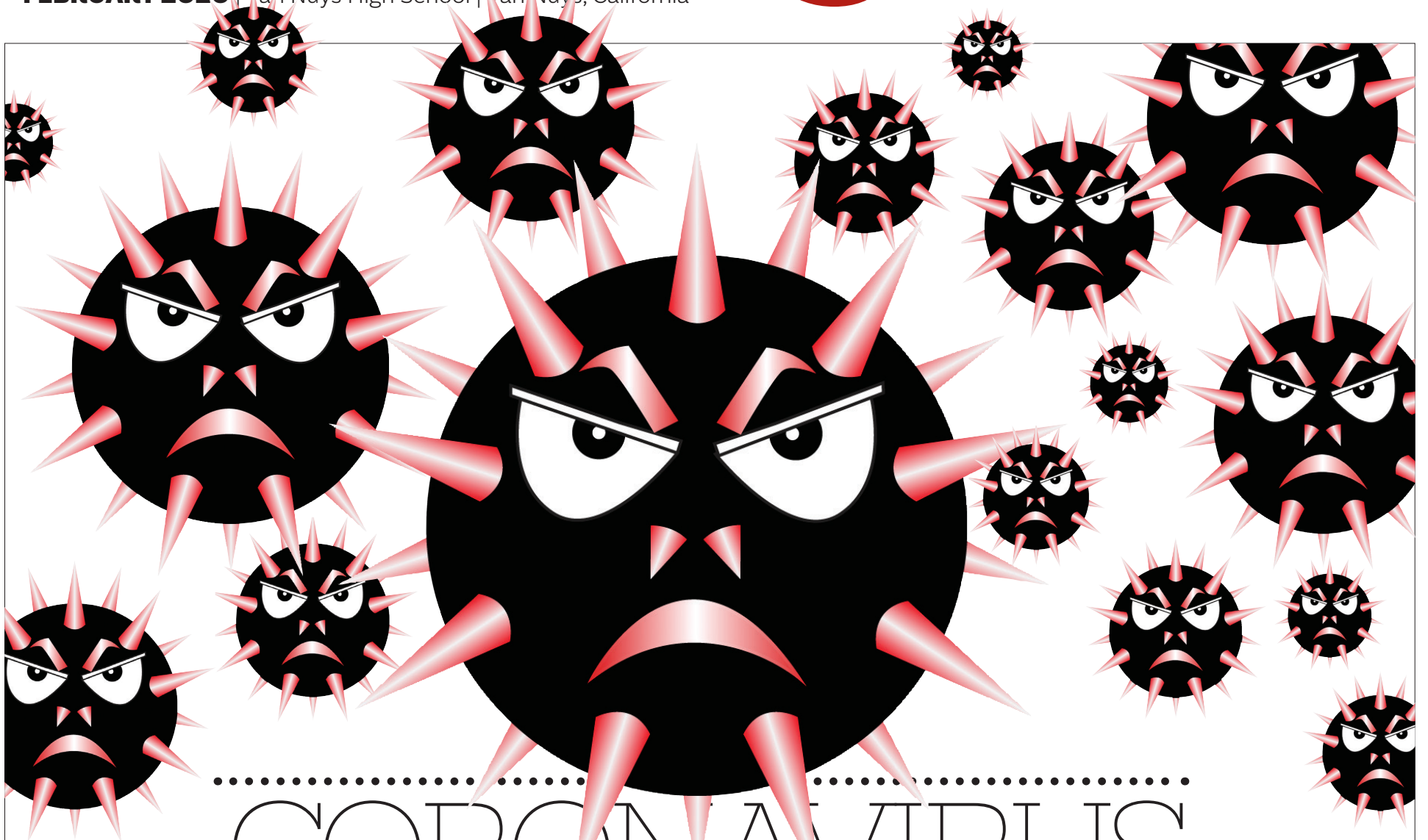
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# the **MIRROR**

FEBRUARY 2020 | Van Nuys High School | Van Nuys, California

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**Should you be worried about getting sick?**

California has confirmed six cases of coronavirus — a contagious respiratory illness — with at least one in Los Angeles County. As the disease infects thousands worldwide, research is being conducted on how the virus spreads and how those who are infected can be cured.

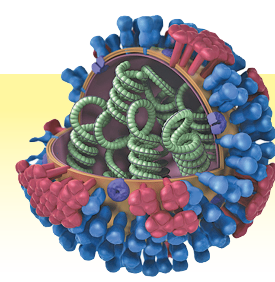
**Getting through the onslaught unscathed**

Disease knows no borders. In our interconnected world, infections can spread from rural villages to major cities in a short time, entering a human host through the mouth, eyes and nose and more. Daily activities make the spread of illness very easy. How can you protect yourself and others?

**Is hand sanitizer enough to protect you?**

Germs and disease are everywhere: in the air, on our food. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends washing hands whenever possible to reduce germs, or to use hand sanitizer. Also, studies show that face masks may be effective in helping to keep you well.

# CORONAVIRUS INFLUENZA WHOOPIING COUGH TARGET: YOU



### Helping hens

The most common way to make flu vaccines is using an egg-based process. Live virus is injected into fertilized hen's eggs to replicate, then harvested, killed and purified to make the vaccine. SOURCE: CDC

## CORONAVIRUS: Not a major threat yet in the U.S., but public health officials take precautions anyway

BY ANI TUTUNJYAN & MHAR TENORIO  
THE MIRROR STAFF

Six cases of coronavirus, a new virus that first appeared in Wuhan, China last month, have been confirmed in California. One case each in Los Angeles and Orange County and four in Northern California have been reported.

These reports follow after the first cases in the United States were confirmed in Boston, Washington, Arizona and Chicago. There are a total of 11 cases nationwide.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the coronavirus a global health emergency, as the virus has spread to 23 countries worldwide.

Globally, at least 14,557 cases have been confirmed. This number, however, continues to increase over a thousand each day. It has killed at least 304 people. Only one death has been reported outside of China so far — a man in the Philippines.

The total number of people infected with coronavirus in mainland China surpassed those infected with the SARS during the 2002-2003 epidemic.

The virus is thought to have originated in Wuhan, China, a city almost three times the population of Los Angeles.

Coronavirus is considered a zoonotic disease — initially transmitted from animals to humans. Most of the people who initially got sick in Wuhan had a link to large seafood and live animal markets.

As of now, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed two person-to-person transmissions in the U.S.

It was spread from a woman who recently traveled to China to her husband upon returning to Chicago. The other case followed a similar pattern.

The first U.S. case was detected in an unnamed man who spent time in Wuhan. Four days after his arrival at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, he felt ill and sought medical care and doctors were able to confirm the virus on Jan. 21.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health confirmed that the first case in L.A., reported on Jan. 22, followed a similar pattern. In the most updated news release, the department stated that the first case in L.A. was a returning traveler from Wuhan, China.

The patient is currently being treated at an unnamed local hospital to protect the patient's privacy. Officials are identifying people the infected patient came into contact with and are monitoring them for symptoms of coronavirus-related illnesses.

After news of the spread of coronavirus to the U.S., five airports implementing extended screenings of passengers who have recently been to Wuhan, including Los Angeles International Airport. All major U.S. airlines have cancelled all flights to China.

Arriving passengers will answer questions about respiratory-related symptoms and have their temperature taken. They are screened for any symptoms indicating the presence of the virus. Those whose symptoms match that of the virus will be detained.

According to the CDC, symptoms of coronavirus-induced illnesses include runny nose, fever, sore throat and headache. It can be transmitted through direct contact and through the air by coughing and sneezing.

"The virus is not as infectious as the flu and the symptoms less severe but it is spread by coughing and sneezing," said C. Michael White, a pharmacist at the University of Connecticut.

The virus can be contagious for up to 14 days before symptoms show. This means that people who seem to be healthy can spread the disease.

White, however, noted that the elderly and the very young are "at greatest risk of dying."

The risk of the virus rapidly spreading across the United States is still considered low, according to the CDC and the L.A. County Department of Public Health, even though WHO has classified the outbreak as a potential pandemic.

"There is no immediate threat to the general pub-

lic, no special precautions are required, and people should not be excluded from activities based on their race, country of origin, or recent travel if they do not have symptoms of respiratory illness," a press release from L.A. Public Health Department stated.

As of now, there are no known treatments for coronavirus infections. The CDC assures that it is working with the WHO in monitoring the situation and finding ways to prevent the further spread of the virus.

Scientists and health officials are rushing to create a vaccine against the virus, which at a minimum could take six months. Any distribution of a vaccine to the public, however, will take even longer, considering the need for trials and approval from the Food and Drug Administration.

The Director of Public Health in L.A. County, Dr. Barbara Ferrer, PhD, MPH, MEd, stated that the department is working closely with federal, state, and local partners to take precautionary measures and to continuously update the public of news about the virus.

"L.A. County is well prepared to manage cases and suspected cases of novel coronavirus," Dr. Ferrer stated in a news release statement.

For now, the CDC recommends people to regularly wash their hands to protect from the virus. Personal belongings must also be cleaned and disinfected.

Those infected with the virus are asked to avoid direct contact with others and to wear face masks to preclude further infection. The CDC advises those infected to take pain, fever, cough and sore throat medicine. Resting, drinking fluids and anything to alleviate sore throat and fever are also recommended.

"Los Angeles residents, students, workers, and visitors should continue to engage in their regular activities and practice good public health hygiene as this is the height of flu season across the County," the L.A. County Public Health news release stated.

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The [coronavirus] is not as infectious as the flu and the symptoms less severe but it is spread by coughing and sneezing.”

C. MICHAEL WHITE  
Pharmacist at the University of Connecticut



## FACE MASKS ARE THEY EFFECTIVE?

With the Wuhan coronavirus spreading rapidly to different regions of the world, individuals are scurrying to protect themselves and their loved ones from the infectious virus.

Because of the lack of information on the virus, many in infected areas are wearing surgical masks to prevent becoming infected, resulting in a shortage of masks in cities in China. Many Amazon.com merchants are sold out.

However, even with the popularity of masks, questions remain about their effectiveness.

Some viruses, including coronavirus and influenza, can be spread through coughing or sneezing. According to at least one study, when masks are used the correct way, they lower risks of catching the flu by up to 80 percent.

Masks do curb the spread of airborne viruses, but if those infected touch their eyes or nose, then another person or surface, whoever they came in contact with and those who touched the contaminated surface are at risk of falling sick as well.

So even though masks do help keep the virus from spreading, they are not as effective in protecting the wearer from being infected.

There are two different types of masks available: surgical masks and respirators. Surgical masks are typically used by doctors, nurses and dentists while treating patients to protect from splashes and sprays, such as sneezes, coughs and other hazardous fluids.

While they create a temporary barrier, tiny particles nonetheless can easily seep through the mask because of its fairly thin material and loose fit.

Respirators, commonly used by construction workers, use denser materials to filter out about 95 percent of airborne particles, including viruses and bacteria, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

While the CDC hasn't issued an advisory for the general public to wear masks, health experts do recommend taking the same precautions you would take for a regular cold or flu: wash your hands often, avoid touching your eyes and mouth, stay away from others who are sick and stay home if you are sick.

• PILAR SIMS

“

L.A. County is well prepared to manage cases and suspected cases of novel coronavirus.”

DR. BARBARA FERRER  
L.A. County Director of Public Health

## PROTECT YOURSELF

Wash your hands often or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

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.

SOURCE: CDC

## INFLUENZA: Vaccine may not offer much protection

BY ANI TUTUNJYAN  
THE MIRROR STAFF

The United States may be headed into a bad flu season, as the Centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC) figures show "widespread" flu activity in Puerto Rico and 48 states with the season beginning unusually early.

A total of 140,000 to 250,000 flu hospitalizations and between 8,200 and 20,000 deaths have been estimated between Oct. 1, 2019 and Jan. 18, 2020 by the CDC, with the highest rates of hospitalization and death rates among children ages zero to four and adults ages 65 and over.

These statistics shot up almost to the peak

reached at the height of the 2017-18 flu season, which was the most severe in the decade. About 61,000 Americans died of the flu that season according to the CDC.

This year's vaccine may not be particularly effective against the B/Victoria strain of the virus now widespread in the U.S., the CDC said. However, it is worth getting the shot since people who are vaccinated are better off if they get the flu than those who are not.

"Even if you do get the flu vaccine and still get sick, you are hopefully preventing yourself from getting the worst strain," said school Nurse Ashley Smith.

The current season did begin unusually early this

year. By late November, the virus broke out from Texas to Georgia and made its way to California.

It is still too early to know how severe this flu season will be, the CDC reports.

Thus far, almost none of the samples tested by the CDC have been resistant to Tamiflu or any other common anti-flu drug. Those medications do not cure the flu, but reduce the severity of an infection and its symptoms if taken early.

"The number one thing everyone can do to prevent getting the flu is washing their hands frequently," said Smith.

"Vaccinate, wash your hands, cover your cough, and stay at home if you have a fever."

## WHOOPIING COUGH: Outbreaks still threaten L.A. schools

BY MHAR TENORIO  
THE MIRROR STAFF

Pertussis, more commonly known as whooping cough, is a highly-contagious respiratory disease that induces violent coughs that sound like a "whoop."

Caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*, it can only be found in humans, although it can infect anyone, infants aged one-year-old or younger are most susceptible to the disease.

Even though 5,066 cases of pertussis were reported to the Centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC) in 2019, only one person died. In Los Angeles alone accounted for almost 40 percent of the

reported cases.

Last semester, an outbreak occurred at Van Nuys High School when a number of students tested positive for the disease. The students were sent home and letters were sent to parents of all students in their classes informing them of the situation. The students could only return to class with a doctor's certification.

In February a year ago, Harvard Westlake School, an exclusive private school near Van Nuys in Studio City, experienced a pertussis outbreak in which 30 students were diagnosed with the disease.

According to the CDC, early symptoms include runny nose, mild cough and fever. As the disease

progresses, symptoms are more extreme and noticeable, particularly successive, heavy coughing may cause vomiting and exhaustion. Antibiotics are used to treat the disease.

There are currently two vaccines to prevent transmission, although a resistant strain can still be contracted, even though a person has been vaccinated.

"Whooping cough remains a threat," said school Nurse Ashley Smith R.N. "The best way to combat this is to be vaccinated."

In 2014, L.A. Unified School District required that all incoming seventh grade students be vaccinated. LAUSD offers free vaccines at select clinics throughout the district.

## PURELL MAKING FALSE CLAIMS?

Marketed as the hand sanitizer that "kills more than 99.99% of most common germs that may cause illness," the maker of Purell hand sanitizers have been given a warning by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to stop making unproven claims of being able to prevent Ebola, MRSA or the flu.

In a warning letter sent last month, the FDA told Purell's makers, Gojo Industries, that its claims that their hand sanitizers could reduce the potential for infection or prevent illnesses violated the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

Within the "Frequently Asked Questions" section of the Gojo website, statements suggest that Purell hand sanitizers may be effective against contracting viruses, ranging from Ebola to the flu.

The FDA said that it was "unaware of any adequately regulated studies demonstrating that killing or decreasing the number of bacteria or viruses on the skin by a certain degree produced a corresponding reduction in infection or disease caused by such bacteria or virus."

The agency's letter outlined further claims from the company's websites and social media accounts that it had issues with, such as the statement that said "Purell products are proven to reduce absenteeism," the practice of regularly staying away from an obligation without good reason.

The FDA has given Gojo Industries two options: stop making false claims or file to designate Purell as a drug. Until then, the agency said that Purell will be reclassified as an unapproved drug, rather than an over-the-counter product, which means the company must correct the violations or face legal action. • KAYLA LEE

