

NorthWest Bergen Regional Health Commission
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Health Officer: Angela Musella, MA, CHES



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To Our NWBRHC Communities:

As you are aware, the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), first detected in Wuhan, China, has received widespread coverage as it continues to spread around the world and now in the United States. Coronavirus is a type of common virus that can infect your respiratory tract. It can spread much like other cold viruses. Almost everyone gets a coronavirus infection at least once in their life, most likely as a young child. Cases of this particular virus is mostly seen in the fall and winter.

Sometimes a novel (meaning “new”) type of coronavirus emerges and begins infecting humans. The type of coronavirus that has recently emerged in Wuhan, China, is a new type of coronavirus and is infecting people for the first time, which means people do not have any immunity to it. Additionally, there is no vaccine available.

While the CDC considers this to be a public health concern, based on current information, the immediate health risk from the 2019-nCoV (COVID-19) to the general public in the U.S. is considered low at this time. As surveillance continues, it is expected that more cases will be identified.

NWBRHC, under the guidance of the New Jersey Department of Health, NJDOH, is monitoring the situation closely and is working collaboratively with both state and federal agencies.

To limit the risk of spread, health officials are working with healthcare providers to promptly identify and evaluate anyone they think may have the virus. As of today, there are no additional precautions recommended for the general public. However, steps you can take to prevent the spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent coronavirus:

- Follow good respiratory hygiene recommendations. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve, not your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Stay home if you are sick and avoid sick people.
- Review and follow CDC travel advisories when planning travel. If you become ill after returning home to the United States, call your healthcare provider before going to a doctor’s office or emergency department of a hospital. They may want to place a mask on you before you enter the building to protect other people.

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Additionally, as per the NJDOH and Centers for Disease Control, CDC, there are a few things that can be done now to prepare for possible community transmission of COVID-19:

- Stock up on a two-week supply of food and water
- Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home
- Have non-prescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers/fever-reducing medications, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins, tissues.
- Stock up on household supplies such as toilet paper, hand soap, paper towels, garbage bags, cleaning supplies, etc.
- Get copies and maintain electronic versions of health records from doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, and other sources and store them for personal reference.
- Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what would be needed for them in your home.
- Have pet foods and supplies.
- Stock up on baby care items
- Plan for extended school and daycare closures
- Talk to your employer about telecommuting opportunities if the movement of people is restricted
- Plan for a sick room in the home. Designate one room that would work best, usually a bedroom with its own bathroom that no one else will use. If someone in the home becomes ill, keep them in the sick room away from others.

The NJDOH Novel Coronavirus Call Center is open 24/7 and can accommodate callers in multiple languages. If you have additional questions, they can be reached at 1-800-222-1222.

The following links may also be helpful:

- [New Jersey Department of Health Coronavirus Information](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Situation Summary](#)
- [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#)

As this is a rapidly changing situation, we will continue to update you as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,

Angela Musella
Health Officer