

Coronavirus Update

As this is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, we will provide updated information as it becomes available, in addition to updated guidance.

Information as of March 10, 2020

COVID-19 AWARENESS

Mayor Giblin and the Township Committee recognize that residents are concerned and may be experiencing feelings of uncertainty and fear about the growing number of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) cases that have been reported in the United States, as well as the recently reported presumptive positive cases within New Jersey. We would like to assure all residents that we are working diligently within Cranford, and in conjunction with county, state, federal and private sector partners, to respond to the public health threat posed by this virus.

Over the last two weeks, Township Committee Leadership as well as key stakeholders from our Office of Emergency Management, Cranford Schools, and our Department Leadership have been meeting to discuss preparedness, mitigation, and response measures. This is a very fluid situation with new information coming out on a daily basis and we continue to closely monitor it.

Working closely in coordination with our local Health Department and Office of Emergency Management, we are prepared and ready to respond should the virus emerge in Cranford. Our public safety departments are routinely trained and equipped to respond to suspected COVID-19 cases. The response to them is very similar to how these agencies respond to all calls involving patients with influenza-like illness. It is important to realize that if you see our responders with enhanced protective gear, they are not necessarily responding to a COVID-19 incident are simply taking appropriate preparedness measures as prescribed by their training and CDC guidance.

It is important for residents to remain calm and avoid “information overload” posed by the extensive coverage of the coronavirus within mainstream and social media. Taking common precautions is everyone’s best preparedness measure.

Simple steps that you can take to prevent the spread of the flu and common cold will also help prevent COVID-19:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands;
- Avoid contact with people who are sick;
- Stay home while you are sick and avoid contact with others;
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing;
- Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces.

This is not a time to panic, but a time for preparation. We ask that you do your part to help keep Cranford safe and healthy.

Please share facts, not fear, and refer to credible sources like the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, the New Jersey Department of Health or the Township website to obtain updated information on COVID-19. Information from these organizations can easily be found below.

The Township Committee, Administration, Health Department and Office of Emergency Management would like to emphasize that this is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, but we remain vigilant in providing updated information and guidance as it becomes available.

The safety of all residents is our highest priority, and we assure you that we stand ready to respond should COVID-19 appear in Cranford.

Coronavirus: Fact Sheet and Links

Overview of issue/event

- The CDC is closely monitoring an outbreak caused by a new coronavirus in Wuhan, China that first emerged in December 2019.
- The outbreak first started in Wuhan, China, but cases have been identified in other international locations including the United States.
- Limited person-to-person spread is occurring however, it is unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people.
- As this is a new virus, there is still much to be learned about how it spreads, the severity of associated illness, and other features of the virus.

Main messages/Key messages

- While the CDC considers this to be a serious public health concern, based on current information, the immediate **health risk from the 2019-nCoV 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. Further, it is expected that the number of fully recovered patients will also increase.
- NJDOH is monitoring the situation closely and is proactively preparing guidance documents for public health and health care professionals to be able to effectively respond to any cases that may be identified in the state.

What is the agency doing to address the issue

- The CDC is closely working with the World Health Organization to monitor this situation.
- Entrance screening has been implemented at five US airports (JFK, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta) to identify passengers from Wuhan who may be ill.
- NJ Department of Health is working with state and federal partner agencies to establish contacts should ill travelers be identified; is creating guidance documents for investigating and managing

suspect cases and their contacts; and is evaluating and modifying current respiratory surveillance to assist in the detection of suspect cases.

Public health recommendations for the public/impacted

- 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.

If someone has returned from China, but has no symptoms, can they be swabbed to be sure that they do not have the virus?

The CDC is currently not testing every individual returning from travel in China and there should be no restrictions on individuals who are asymptomatic.

I am planning to travel soon. Should I wear a mask on the plane?

The CDC has not made any recommendations that travelers need to wear masks in an effort to prevent exposure to the 2019 novel coronavirus. For the most recent travel advisories from the CDC, please visit their web page [here](#).

If a coworker is diagnosed with the new coronavirus, can I get it from the office environment?

If a coworker was diagnosed with coronavirus, it is most likely the common seasonal coronavirus, not the novel virus identified in China which can only be identified at the CDC. Seasonal coronaviruses are spread like any other respiratory illness so precautions like hand hygiene, covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing, staying home when sick, and avoiding sick people are things individuals can do to prevent illness.

If there is a student/coworker/employee/health care worker who recently traveled to China, should they be excluded from work or school?

People who are not showing any symptoms of 2019-nCoV are not restricted from attending school or work.

What type of office cleaning should be done if there is a case of coronavirus?

As with any seasonal respiratory illness, routine cleaning is effective. Routine cleaning products are fine, bleach is not necessary.

Is it safe to receive packages from China?

Coronaviruses do not live very long on surfaces, so it is considered to be very low risk to become infected by handling a package from China. There have been no evidence to support the spread of the virus through imported goods. There have, however, been misinformation on social media which is contradictory to this.

If I am in close contact with someone who has coronavirus should I wear a surgical mask protect myself from becoming infected?

There is little need for the general public to wear face masks in the U.S. currently as the threat level is low. But for people who are in close contact with an infected person, a mask may be helpful if used properly. They are not 100% effective as the virus can enter through the sides of the mask or enter the body through the eyes. First responders and health care workers are specifically trained in the use of masks and are fit tested annually to ensure they are effective at protecting them.

Additional Information

- Information on the virus from the state: <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>
- The latest situation summary updates from CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Travel Advisory](#) from the U.S. Department of State
- [Travel Health Alert Notices](#) (English and Chinese)
- [CDC Travel Advisory](#) to avoid all nonessential travel to China
- [NJ Health Surveillance Criteria](#)

Frequently Asked Questions for the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) for Schools

Provided on March 2, 2020 by the Health Department

1. What can I do to prevent COVID-19 infections in my school?

At the present time, there is low risk in the state of New Jersey. SHOULD the NJ Department of Health and the NJ Department of Education determine that there is a level of potential cases in New Jersey, the following information will be helpful.

Continue your normal seasonal flu precautionary measures.

You can help students and staff reduce their risk for getting and spreading viral respiratory infections, including the flu and the common cold, by encouraging them to take simple steps, which will also prevent COVID-19. These include:

- Staying home when they are sick.
- Following established exclusion recommendations for acute respiratory illness. (Patients should be fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications before returning to school).
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after they blow their nose. Help young children do the same. If hands are visibly dirty, use soap and water to clean hands.
- Using a hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.
- Advising persons to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Following the school's routine cleaning and disinfection program. Emphasizing to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Covering coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in the trash and cleaning hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer (if soap and water are not readily available). If tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow, NOT YOUR HANDS.
- Urging students and staff to get a flu vaccine - it's not too late!
- Providing adequate supplies for good hygiene, including clean and functional hand washing stations, soap, paper towels, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures

Schools should follow standard procedures for cleaning and disinfecting with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfectant with a claim for human coronaviruses. Typically, this means daily sanitizing surfaces and objects

that are touched often, such as bathrooms, water coolers, desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones and toys.

2. What are novel coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that commonly circulate throughout the world. They cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more serious illnesses like pneumonia. A novel (new) coronavirus is a type of coronavirus that has not been previously found in humans.

3. What is COVID-19?

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a coronavirus identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China. Infections with this new virus have been reported in other regions of China and in some travelers from Wuhan to other countries, including the U.S.

4. How serious is COVID-19 and what are the range of symptoms?

School aged children and young adults may experience mild up to moderate illness, unless they have compromised immune system. In populations 50 and older adults, especially males, can experience more severe symptoms specifically with those underlying health issues.

Symptoms can include fever, cough and shortness of breath.

5. How does this virus spread?

Much is still unknown about how COVID-19 spreads. Current information suggests that person-to-person spread is occurring, although it is not clear how easily the virus spreads between people.

6. How many days does it take to get sick from the virus after exposure?

This period is called the incubation period. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear between 2 and 14 days after exposure. This estimated range is based on the incubation period of previously studied coronaviruses.