



TOWNSHIP OF IRVINGTON DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

MUNICIPAL BUILDING
1 CIVIC SQUARE, IRVINGTON, NJ 07111
TEL: (973) 416-7760
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The Honorable Tony Vauss
Mayor

Sonia Whyte, MPA
Director of Health

March 5, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Irvington Department of Health and Senior Services understands that the Novel Coronavirus, now known as COVID-19, maybe causing you and other individuals in our community to worry. The department is working to provide you with the most up to date information on this rapidly evolving situation. Following is a brief overview of the current situation, including actions you can take along with your loved ones.

24-Hour Public Hotline: The State of New Jersey has trained healthcare professionals standing by to answer questions about coronavirus. The call is free. 1-800-222-1222.

WHAT IS KNOWN

- The virus causing COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified and causes a respiratory illness ranging from a mild cold-like illness to severe pneumonia.
- Most (81%) of people diagnosed with COVID-19 in China had mild disease, including most children.
- Similar to influenza, the people who are most likely to have severe disease and complications from COVID-19 are older individuals (>60 years old) and those with other medical conditions like heart and lung disease or diabetes.
- There is no vaccine or treatment currently available for COVID-19 but the National Institutes of Health is evaluating treatments and developing a vaccine already.
- Currently, there is NO confirmed community spread of COVID-19, meaning the virus is not being spread from person-to-person. However, experts predict there will eventually be community spread.

HOW THE VIRUS SPREADS

- COVID-19 is believed to spread primarily the same way the common cold or flu spreads—through respiratory droplets that are produced when someone coughs or sneezes.
- People who are most at risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 are those who have been in close contact (within about 6 feet) with someone who has the disease.
- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread of the virus might be possible before a person has symptoms; there have been reports of this with COVID-19, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

- Keep children home when they are sick.
- Students (and parents/guardians) who are ill, especially with acute respiratory symptoms (not allergies or chronic conditions), should stay home.
- Teach your children to always cover their cough and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
- Remind them to wash their hands with soap and water (or use hand sanitizer) after they touch their face, use the restroom, and before they eat.
- Tell children to avoid touching their mouth and nose since that is how germs get into the body.

- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects (everyday household disinfectants are fine)
- Enhance cleaning of high touch surfaces like door knobs, toilet handles, and sink handles.
- Plan for when community spread occurs.
- Ensure you have a plan to designate a caregiver, such as a family member or neighbor, for a sick child(ren) if you can't stay home.
- Know your child's school plan to communicate with you when needed, such as robocalls, email or checking their website.

Because most people with COVID-19 have mild disease, the likelihood that the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) will recommend closing schools is very low, but not zero. In the highly unlikely chance that schools are closed due to COVID-19, it is important for parents/guardians to have a plan for who could take care of your child.

The Irvington Department of Health and Senior Services is actively monitoring this evolving situation and will continue to provide new information to the community as the situation continues to unfold. The department is tasked with investigating infectious diseases within the community and will take all necessary actions it deems appropriate to protect public health. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Health Department, your child's school, or your primary healthcare provider. The following Health Department staff members can be reach at:

Michelle Gardner, Communicable Disease Investigator

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Christopher Hellwig, Health Officer

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More information can be found at:

- [24-Hour Public Hotline 1-800-222-1222](tel:1-800-222-1222)
- The Irvington Department of Health and Senior Services at (973) 416-7760 or www.irvington.net
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at: www.cdc.gov
- The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) website at www.nj.gov/health

Sincerely,

Christopher Hellwig

Health Officer

Cc:

Michelle Gardner, Communicable Disease Investigator

Sonia Whyte, Director of Health

Musa Malik, Business Administrator

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET

Novel Coronavirus



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What is a novel coronavirus?

Novel (meaning "new") coronavirus is a virus strain that has only spread in humans since December 2019. Sometimes referred to as "2019-nCoV" or "COVID-19", this virus was first identified as the source of illness in individuals living in or spending time in Wuhan, China. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness in some people.

How does novel coronavirus spread?

Health experts are still learning the details about how this new coronavirus spreads. Other coronaviruses spread from an infected person to other through:

- The air by coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes
- In rare cases, contact with feces (poop)

How severe is novel coronavirus?

Health experts are still learning about the illness caused by the new virus. Individuals who are infected have had illness that ranged from mild (like a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires medical care in a hospital. So far, deaths have been reported mainly in older adults who had other health conditions.

What are the symptoms?

People who have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as two (2) days or as long as 14 days after being exposed to the virus. The symptoms may include:



Fever



Cough



**Difficulty breathing or
shortness of breath**

Who is at risk of getting novel coronavirus?

Currently, there is a widespread outbreak in Wuhan China, but cases have been identified in a growing number of other international locations including the United States. At this time, the risk in the United States, including New Jersey, remains low for the general public. At this time, there are a small number of cases in the United States. 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.

Travelers to and from certain areas of the world may be at an increased risk. Italy, South Korea, and Iran have had an increase in cases and the CDC has released travel alerts for these areas. The most up to date travel guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can be found online at www.cdc.gov/travel

How can novel coronavirus be prevented?

If you are traveling overseas to China, Italy, South Korea, Iran, or other international locations, follow the CDC's latest guidance at www.cdc.gov/travel

At this time, there are no vaccines available to prevent novel coronavirus infections.

Currently, the novel coronavirus has not been spreading widely in the United States, so there are no additional precautions to recommend for the general public. It is important to practice the same everyday health precautions that are recommended for reducing the spread of the flu and the common cold. The following steps will help prevent coronavirus:

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water. If not available, use alcohol-based 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 close contact with others
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or the crease of your elbow when coughing or sneezing



How is novel coronavirus treated?

There are no medications specifically approved for coronavirus. Most people with mild coronavirus illness will recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. However, some cases may develop pneumonia and require medical care or treatment in a hospital.

Where can I get more information?

- [24-Hour Public Hotline 1-800-222-1222](tel:1-800-222-1222)
- Your doctor, nurse, or clinic
- The Irvington Department of Health and Senior Services at (973) 416-7760 or www.irvington.net
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at: www.cdc.gov
- The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) website at www.nj.gov/health

Please note, as health experts learn more about novel coronavirus, recommendations may change