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Hunterdon County Department of Health

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2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Seasonal Influenza: What Hunterdon County Residents Need to Know

March 6, 2020

The Hunterdon County Health Department and the Hunterdon County Office of Emergency Management, along with State and Federal partners continue to monitor the outbreak of Novel Coronavirus or COVID-19. The County is closely coordinating prevention and response efforts with representatives from every municipality in Hunterdon County, medical care providers, school districts and first responders.

About COVID-19

It is important to know the risk of COVID-19 to the general public is low, and there are currently no reported cases in Hunterdon County. Limited person-to-person spread is occurring in the United States, and we are continuing to learn about the Novel Coronavirus. We expect see more cases of COVID-19 as the availability of testing expands. The virus is likely spread through the coughs and sneezes of those who are ill, similar to influenza and other respiratory viruses. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Most people experience mild illness, however the elderly and immunocompromised may develop severe illness which can result in death.

Hunterdon County Updates

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) is monitoring the situation closely and preparing guidance documents for all of New Jersey's local public health departments, hospitals, and all health care professionals. The Hunterdon County Health Department (HCHD) staff are following the evolving outbreak of COVID-19 and are prepared to investigate any reported cases of Coronavirus reported in Hunterdon County. HCHD is in contact with recent travelers to the affected region, assessing their risk for COVID-19 and providing guidance for monitoring signs and symptoms, in accordance with guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health.

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Physical Address: 314 State Rt 12, County Complex, Bldg #1, 2nd Floor
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2900, Flemington NJ 08822
Tel: (908) 788-1351 Fax: (908) 782-7510
Email: health@co.hunterdon.nj.us



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The Hunterdon County Communications Center has implemented enhanced 9-1-1 call screening measures to assess risk from the onset of an emergency. Those calling 9-1-1 are reminded to answer all questions posed from the dispatcher thoroughly. The County continues to review Continuity of Operations and Government plans, encouraging businesses and other organizations to do the same. Additionally, the County is reviewing standard protocols and actions that are used to limit the spread of illness and infection at Hunterdon County facilities.

While the County continues to track the outbreak of COVID-19, limiting the spread of the flu virus in Hunterdon County remains a high priority. Anyone can get the flu, even healthy people. In the 2018-2019 flu season an estimated 35.5 million people were sickened and 34,200 people died from influenza in the United States. The annual vaccine and proper hand hygiene is your best defense against the influenza virus.

Residents are encouraged to take practical actions to stay healthy from respiratory viruses, such as Influenza or COVID-19:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick,
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available,
- Clean and disinfect surfaces frequently,
- Stay home if you are sick. This allows you to recover and protects others who may be immunocompromised from becoming ill.
- Review and follow CDC travel advisories when planning travel. CDC travel advisories are available <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
- Stay up-to-date on COVID-19 from reliable sources. The New Jersey Department of Health's (NJDOH) Novel Coronavirus Call center is open 24/7 and available at 1-800-222-1222.

Please visit the following websites for situation updates:

Hunterdon County Health Department
<http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/coronavirus.html>

New Jersey Department of Health
<https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>

The Center for Disease Control
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

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