

ABOUT NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (nCoV)

Montgomery Township Health Department Information to Residents

A coronavirus is a type of common virus that can infect your respiratory tract, and can spread much like cold viruses. They tend to circulate in the fall and winter. Almost everyone gets a coronavirus infection at least once in their lifetime, most likely as a young child.

Sometimes a novel (new) type of coronavirus emerges and begins infecting humans, like in Wuhan, China. Since the coronavirus is new and people have not developed resistance to it, the virus is causing an outbreak of respiratory illness.

While the CDC considers this to be a serious public health concern, based on current information (1/28/2020), the immediate health risk from the 2019-nCoV to the general American public is considered low at this time.

The Montgomery Health Department is working with the NJ Department of Health to monitor the situation closely, and proactively distribute guidance documents for health care professionals to effectively respond to any cases that may be identified in the state.

The Montgomery Health Department is also working with the NJ Department of Health to establish contacts should ill travelers be identified; and sharing guidance documents for investigating and managing suspect cases and their contacts.

It is recommended that individuals follow these public health guidelines, not just for coronavirus, ***but also to prevent the spread of influenza*** (which is widespread in New Jersey):

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue (then properly dispose of the tissue) or sleeve, not your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after touching commonly used surfaces. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Stay home if you are sick and avoid sick people.
- Review and follow CDC travel advisories (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/novel-coronavirus-china>) 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.

The NJ Department of Health has established a call center for people with questions about coronavirus (in partnership with NJ Poison Center) at **1-800-222-1222**. Here is a fact sheet from NJ Department of Health https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/NCOV-web_FactSheet-FINAL-OCredits_01262020.pdf

For more information visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “FAQ on Coronavirus” website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html> or call the Montgomery Health Department at 908-359-8211.

Montgomery Health Officer Stephanie Carey said, “Let’s do a reality check here. There is a lot of flu in our community right now, and there is no nCoV now. If you are sick with flu, or a stomach bug, or a cold, *please* stay home! If you haven’t had a flu shot yet this season, get one right now to reduce the number of illnesses. Get your information from reliable sources (like those listed here)—social media is fast, but can be inaccurate. People who aren’t sick have no restrictions. And finally, this situation is evolving, and the Health Department will continue to give updates as the situation changes.”