



NorthWest Bergen Regional Health Commission  
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Website: [www.nwbrhc.org](http://www.nwbrhc.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NWBRHC](http://www.facebook.com/NWBRHC)

March 11, 2020

Dear NWBRHC Community,

Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission continues to monitor the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation. We are working with local governments, county, and New Jersey State Health Department (NJDOH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to respond to all cases effectively, as well as to limit exposure. We ask that you kindly read this entire memo.

Please be aware that the State of New Jersey and Bergen County have both declared a Public Health State of Emergency. Be assured, we are maintaining communication with necessary stakeholders, as this is an evolving situation.

At this time, the CDC and NJDOH do not recommend testing, symptom monitoring, or special management for people exposed to asymptomatic people with potential exposures to COVID-19 (such as in a household), i.e., "contacts of contacts;" these people are not considered exposed to COVID-19. Additionally, we have not received guidance regarding postponement and/or cancellation of public events.

Our guidance continues to be proactive at this time. If you are ill and have symptoms such as cough and fever, we recommend that you stay at home and do not attend public gatherings or go to work/school. If you are not ill and have no symptoms, practice good hand hygiene, and avoid sick people. If you are an older adult and/or have serious chronic medical conditions, please see additional guidance here:

- [Information for People at Risk for Serious Illness from COVID-19](#)

Additionally, all individuals should:

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash; if a tissue is not available, cough into your elbow or sleeve, not your hand.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask. CDC does not recommend people who are well wearing a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should only be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, if soap and water are not available. We do not recommend home-based preparation.

If the public has questions, they should contact the NJ call center: **1-800-222-1222 or 1-800-962-1253 if in NJ but using a non-NJ cell phone**. The call center is free, open 24/7, and has multi-language capacity. Calling the hotline is the best, fastest way to get answers to your questions about COVID-19 via trained healthcare professionals. The call is free. The call center is not able to diagnose individuals or give specific medical recommendations. Callers who need medical advice should contact their healthcare provider.

The NJ Department of Human Services also operates a phone line for people seeking mental health services during events that impact the mental health of New Jersey residents. This line is available 24 hours and has language access; **(877) 294-HELP (4357)**. Please note, this line does not replace 911 and is not used to report emergencies.

NJDOH has updated information on its website and various social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. Be sure information is from trusted and credible sources, such as CDC, NJDOH, NWBRHC, or the call center mentioned above. Here are the links for your convenience:

- [NWBRHC](#) (our website, which provides direct links for those immediately below)
- [NJDOH](#)
- [CDC](#)

Additionally, you may find the following direct links helpful:

- [Information for the General Public](#)
- [Information for Schools and Businesses](#)
- [Information for Healthcare and Public Health Professionals \(including risk exposure\)](#)
- [Information for People at Risk for Serious Illness from COVID-19](#)

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

Sincerely,

Angela Musella  
Health Officer