

A Message From the Branchburg Health Officer, Vanessa Freire:

Coronavirus (COVID-19)—What You Need to Know

There are many types of human coronaviruses including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. The Branchburg Health Department is working with the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) to monitor the situation closely and proactively respond to any cases that may be identified in the state. Currently, the Township of Branchburg has 0 cases.

How does COVID-19 Spread?

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Can someone spread the virus without being sick?

People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).

Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, *but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.*

How easily does the virus spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (“community spread”).

How to Protect Yourself and Your Family

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- 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.
 - *If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.*
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wear a face mask if you are sick.

Watch for Symptoms

The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after a COVID-19 exposure.

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed COVID-19 cases.

How to Prepare for a COVID-19 Outbreak Within Our Community

- Store a two-week supply of nonperishable foods and water per person (within your household).
- Refill current prescriptions
- Stock up on common household medications such as pain relievers, cold, and flu remedies.
- Buy a month's worth of soap, detergent, disinfectant, baby supplies, and other essentials you might need.

There is a NJDOH Novel Coronavirus Call Center that is open and is taking calls from the general public only. It is open 24/7 and can accommodate callers in multiple languages. They can be reached at 1-800-222-1222.

For other questions please contact your local health department at health@branchburg.nj.us or 908-526-1300 x183