



New Jersey Chamber of Commerce

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FAST FACTS ON CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

What is it?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new virus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus is thought to spread mainly 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.

It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or an object that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Who is at risk?

Some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes:

- Older adults
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung disease

What can people do to stay healthy and stop the spread of germs?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.

How should employers prepare for the potential of coronavirus in their business community?

The Center for Disease Control has provided interim guidance on its website, click here to visit the website.



SPECIFIC TO NEW JERSEY

Cases in NJ

As of March 10, New Jersey has 15 presumptive positive* cases of coronavirus and one fatality.

* *Presumptive positive tests are sent to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for results confirmation.*

What the State is Doing

In the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, the Governor's Administration has taken steps over the last couple months to prepare for potential cases and to educate the public. In addition to working with the Center for Disease Control, the Governor assembled a task force that includes representatives from the Department of Health and the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness. The Administration also launched a website providing information and resources, and established a 24-hour hotline.

State of Emergency and State of Public Health Emergency

On March 9, Governor Murphy declared a State of Emergency and a Public Health Emergency. This measure, similar to an inclement weather scenario, allows for the state to more easily obtain the resources that it needs to address the issue at hand. Several other states have also declared a state of emergency in response to the spread of COVID-19.

Among other things, the Executive Order enacting NJ's state of emergency allows for more testing, suspends certain regulatory barriers, gives flexibility to government entities in exercising precaution, and invokes a strict price gauging law.

This state of emergency does not direct state offices to close, nor does it suggest that businesses or schools close.

Mass Gatherings

On March 10, NJ Health Commissioner Judy Persichilli stated that until she starts to see evidence of "community spread" – which is person-to-person transmission without a known COVID-19 exposure – the state will not recommend banning or limiting large public gatherings.

"When we start seeing community spread, there is no doubt that we will be exercising more vigilance in our recommendations for closures, travel, and mass transit. But, in New Jersey, we're not there yet."

(NJ DOH Commissioner, Briefing 3.10.2020)

What the Experts are Saying

On getting a flu shot

"We're still in peak season here in New Jersey, so it's not too late to get that flu vaccine and that will take one load off of your mind," state epidemiologist Christina Tan said. "It will help protect you against one of the viruses that's definitely circulating here in New Jersey. The issue of co-infection, we don't have information about that at this time."

Commissioner Persichilli agreed: "I think it's safe to say that anything effects your immune system and lowers it opens you up to more vulnerability to COVID-19," she said. *(ROI-NJ)*



On price gouging

“The state of emergency kicks in the strongest anti-price gauging statutes, which set hard caps on how much prices can increase,” Governor Murphy’s chief counsel, Matt Platkin, said.

Excessive price increases are defined as price increases that are more than 10% higher than the price at which merchandise was sold during the normal course of business prior to the state of emergency. (*ROI-NJ*)

On requiring those under self-quarantine to stay quarantined

“It’s a recommendation,” Persichilli said.

“With these emergency declarations, it could go into an order. We know that the Attorney General’s Office, Mr. Platkin and our legal counsel are working on that. We have had no one that we know of that has broken quarantine.” (*ROI-NJ*)

On not having enough tests

“The testing kit situation, which is well known in the press and talked about a lot, has not affected our ability to test persons under investigation right now,” Persichilli said. “If it becomes a significant surge, we certainly might have a problem, but I think we could do a couple of hundred, if not more, tests right now and as you know we have about 30 in the queue to be tested.” (*ROI-NJ*)

RESOURCES

NJDOH – General Information Page

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>

CDC – General Information Page

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

CDC – Home Isolation Guide

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-home-care.html>

NJDOH – Local Health Department Directory

www.localhealth.nj.gov

US Chamber of Commerce Guidance

https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/guidance_for_employers_to_plan_and_respond_to_coronavirus.pdf

Dispelling Myths About the Coronavirus - World Health Organization

https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters?fbclid=IwAR2vqOfxsAd6o_B5VICeM2RskEAxkOrUq9U6IZxByKo2PpAyY0mpYIXMY_4