



# NOTICE

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## Second Update as of March 6: Information About and Prevention of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

On March 6, 2020, the Maryland Department of Health advised that three cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Montgomery County. All three cases were contracted overseas and the three have been quarantined. Public health officials have indicated the three patients are recovering and an investigation is underway to determine any interactions with the public. The public has been asked to continue to take preventative measures and stay updated with reliable, trusted sources.

Public health efforts at this time are focused on containing spread and mitigating the impact of this virus. The CDC is reporting the risk to the American public remains low. At this time, the agency continues to operate under its normal schedule and programs, with staff and visitors being asked to exercise good hygiene to control the spread of germs.

The M-NCPPC continues to work closely with local/state public health agencies and the agency's medical provider to ensure that appropriate and coordinated protocols are in place. This document addresses frequently asked questions on the Coronavirus and provides links to helpful resources. The information follows the most current guidance from the CDC, which is the federal agency responsible for setting national guidelines for response to new and emerging health concerns. The M-NCPPC will continue to monitor infection control protocols and will implement public health recommendations as required. We will also continue to update our workforce with relevant information.

**The M-NCPPC's Safety Office is the Point of Contact for Workplace Concerns.** Questions/concerns regarding the handling of COVID-19 within M-NCPPC should be directed to the Safety Office, which will coordinate the necessary follow-up with state/local health departments. Each situation will be reviewed against established CDC infection control standards to prevent potential transmission. The Safety Office is available 24 hours/7 days a week through the following numbers:

- **During weekday business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.): 301-454-1740.**
- **After hours: 301-395-0563, 301-275-5126 or 240-393-0419.**

### **What Is the Coronavirus and How Is It Spread?**

According to the CDC, the new Coronavirus causes respiratory illness in people and spreads in ways similar to the common cold or flu. This virus was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China. The CDC maintains a list of countries that are affected with confirmed cases. Although there are isolated cases in the United States, the CDC reports that this virus currently is not spreading in communities within the United States.

Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contact with people who are infected increases the risk of exposure. Patients with COVID-19 Coronavirus have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, patients can have complications from pneumonia.

### **What is Being Done to Prevent the Spread of Coronavirus**

The CDC is working with public health agencies to assess readiness and implement mitigation measures. The M-NCPPC remains in regular contact with local health agencies to put in place all recommended protocols.

## **What Can I Do as an Employee?**

This time of year, individuals are prone to a number of respiratory illnesses. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to a virus. The same everyday precautions apply when dealing with any contagious, respiratory illness—including the COVID-19 Coronavirus. Being prepared and taking preventive measures are essential to staying protected. The CDC recommends steps outlined below:

### **Stay home when you are sick.**

The CDC recommends individuals who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g., cough suppressants) for at least 24 hours.

- Employees should notify their Manager when they are sick. Managers should encourage employees to stay home when they are sick or exhibiting symptoms of a respiratory illness.
- It's important to rest and to prevent exposure to other individuals. You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas to avoid infecting others. Avoid using public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.
- If you have traveled to an area with confirmed cases of Coronavirus, come in contact with someone who has traveled to that area, or might have been exposed to the Coronavirus, you must inform your healthcare provider. **If your healthcare provider determines a risk**, please have the provider contact the M-NCPPC Safety Office at **(301) 395-0563; (301) 275-5126; or (240) 393-0419**.

### **Protect yourself from illness by practicing careful hygiene.**

- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick. Avoid sharing personal household items such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially 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 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** any frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or disinfectant wipe.

### **Extra Precautions Against the COVID-19 (Coronavirus)—Travel**

The CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to areas experiencing confirmed cases of Coronavirus. If travel cannot be avoided, the following link provides current recommendations from the CDC on travel and protection in regions affected by the Coronavirus: <https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

### **Additional Information**

The following links provide additional up-to-date guidance on the Coronavirus and its prevention, as issued by the CDC and the Maryland public health officials. (Hit CTRL and click mouse to activate link or copy into browser.)

- What You Need to Know About Coronavirus Disease 2019(CDC) (<https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>)
- General Information from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene on the Coronavirus 2019 (<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>)

**This Notice includes current relevant information from the CDC on the Coronavirus. However, the following links provide posters which may be used in your facilities.**

Stop the spread of Germs (in English and Spanish) (Hit CTRL and click mouse to activate link or copy into browser.)

<https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs-sp.pdf>