



TORRINGTON AREA HEALTH DISTRICT

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"Promoting Health & Preventing Disease Since 1967"

TAHD: Press Release Coronavirus (COVID-19)

March 2, 2020

Torrington Area Health District (TAHD) is actively monitoring the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and participating in State and Federal teleconferences to ensure we are up to date on the latest CT Department of Public Health and Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) guidance. Federal, State, and Local Public Health Officials have been working diligently to prepare local communities. Information and guidance changes frequently. As with any epidemic, it is wise to be as prepared as possible, both on a community level and on a personal level. The Health District is working with local partners to prepare on a community level. The TAHD is in the process of meeting with local chief elected officials, emergency management directors, School systems, hospitals, ems, and other key community partners to update them on the status of COVID-19 and what they can do to prepare their communities.

Public health officials continue to discover more about this new virus. Person-to-person spread of the virus is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may also be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. This is very similar to how the common cold and influenza are spread. People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic. Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms. How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily in China and other countries.

Preventative actions the general public can take to help stop the spread of viruses including COVID-19 and influenza which is currently widespread throughout the State of CT:

- Wash your hands frequently. Wash for 20 seconds with soap and water. Be sure to wash your hands when you come home from public places. If you do not have access to soap & water, use an alcohol-based (at least 60%) hand sanitizer. Use enough sanitizer to thoroughly cover your hands and rub until dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose with unwashed hands.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Try to eat healthy, nutritious foods.
- Avoid being around sick persons.
- Stay home if you are sick. Children should stay home from school or daycare if they are ill.
- Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue. Discard the tissue properly. Wash your hands. If you don't have a tissue use the crook of your elbow.
- If you are sick or have sick household members, frequently disinfect commonly touched surfaces, such as door knobs and handles, faucet handles, remote controls, tabletops, etc.

Actions the general public can take to prepare in the event of a potential outbreak in your community:

- Have a plan in place for childcare in the event that schools or daycare facilities are closed. Sometimes these closures occur to slow the spread of transmission within a community or because absenteeism is very high.
- Have a plan for taking care of sick family members. This includes having necessary supplies on hand and planning the best way to keep the sick person(s) separate from the healthy persons.
- If your employer will allow you to work from home, be sure to have everything in place to make that possible.
- If you are considering travelling abroad, visit the CDC website (www.cdc.gov) for their most current guidance.
- Refer to the CDC website for current guidance on the use of facemasks. It does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

Borough of Bantam, Bethlehem, Canaan, Cornwall, Goshen, Harwinton, Kent, Borough of Litchfield, Litchfield, Middlebury, Morris, Norfolk, North Canaan, Plymouth, Salisbury, Thomaston, Torrington, Warren, Watertown, Winsted

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TAHD offers the following advice if you should become ill with symptoms of COVID-19:

- Call ahead before you go to your healthcare provider's office, so they can take steps to minimize exposure to other individuals.
- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Separate yourself from others in your household. As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently. Use paper towels to dry your hands, not shared towels.
- Wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then wash your hands thoroughly or use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid sharing household items like cups, eating utensils, towels, etc.
- Frequently disinfect all "high-touch" surfaces, such as doorknobs, remote controls, phones, bathroom fixtures, keyboards, tabletops, etc.

General Public Important Links

(Stay current with the latest information on COVID-19)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-nCoV-fact-sheet.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/images/infographic-symptoms.jpg>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/share-facts.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>

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Director of Health