COVID-19 (coronavirus) Information
(3/17/20)

The information regarding the COVID-19 (coronavirus) is evolving and you can expect guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) will be updated as these agencies receive new information.

It is important to get you information from reliable sources and the links to CDC and DPH are provided as part of this message; visiting these sites will keep you informed and will provide you with the most up to date information on the situation.

INFORMATION

The frequent asked question (FAQ) section of the Department of Public Health's website (https://www.mass.gov/info-details/frequently-asked-questions-about-covid-19) addresses many of the questions being received by the Board of Health (personal protection, travel and the Department's protocols for testing for COVID-19 (coronavirus)) and along with links to additional useful information which is updated as new information emerges.

Citizens can access the Massachusetts 211 system: Dial 211 and follow the prompts.

About Massachusetts 2-1-1

Mass2-1-1 is the 24/7 statewide information and referral line available in 140+ languages that connects callers with critical social service programs and organizations in their local community. It can be reached by dialing 2-1-1 from any landline or cell phone in the state. Mass2-1-1 is a free information and referral service provided through funding from three contracts with the of state of Massachusetts to be their official 24-hour call line, as well as funding from 19 local United Ways across the state.

For information on the Governor's order banning gathering of 25 or more people please clink on the link below and scroll to the section on gatherings.

https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-guidance-and-directives#businesses-&-employers-

PREPAREDNESS

As more cases of COVID-19 are being reported there are actions you and your family can take to prepare; the information below is from the CDC website.

Here is what you can do to prepare your family in case COVID-19 spreads in your community.

- *Know where to find local information on COVID-19 and local trends of COVID-19 cases.*
- *Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if symptomatic:*
  - *Stay home when you are sick*

- Call your health care provider's office in advance of a visit
- Limit movement in the community
- Limit visitors

- *Know what additional measures those at higher risk and who are vulnerable should take.*
- *Implement steps to prevent illness (e.g., stay home when sick, handwashing, respiratory etiquette, clean frequently touched surfaces daily).*
- *Create a household plan of action in case of illness in the household or disruption of daily activities due to COVID-19 in the community.*
  - *Consider 2-week supply of prescription and over the counter medications, food and other essentials. Know how to get food delivered if possible.*
  - *Establish ways to communicate with others (e.g., family, friends, co-workers).*
  - *Establish plans to telework, what to do about childcare needs, how to adapt to cancellation of events.*
- *Know about emergency operations plans for schools/workplaces of household members.*

Additional preparedness information is located at the link below.

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

PREVENTION

Individuals should follow the CDC's prevention actions listed below in order to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- *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.*
- *Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.*
  - *CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.*
  - *Facemasks should 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.*

o *If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.*

There has been public inquiry about the use of masks or respirators and currently the CDC and DPH don't recommend the widespread use of masks or respirators. Listed below is the recommendation from the DPH.

Should I wear a respirator in public?

CDC does not recommend the routine use of respirators outside of workplace settings (in the community). Most often, spread of respiratory viruses from person-to-person happens among close contacts (within 6 feet). CDC recommends everyday preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, such as avoiding people who are sick, avoiding touching your eyes or nose, and covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue. People who are sick should stay home and not go into crowded public places or visit people in hospitals. Workers who are sick should follow CDC guidelines and stay home when they are sick.

IMPORTANT LINKS

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

https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19

https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-printable-fact-sheets

We at the Health Department are available to speak to citizens regarding questions they may have and help them find answers to their questions.