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City of New Haven Health Department Public Health Emergency Information – Homeless/Domestic Violence Shelters/Soup Kitchens

Before a COVID-19 outbreak occurs in your community: Plan

A COVID-19 outbreak could last for a long time in your community. Depending on the severity of the outbreak, public health officials may recommend community actions designed to help keep people healthy, reduce exposures to COVID-19, and slow the spread of the disease. Local public health officials may make recommendations appropriate to your local situation. Creating a plan can help protect the health of the community in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19.

WHAT TO KNOW

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

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

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.

It may 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.

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.

WHAT TO DO

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.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using 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. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

SHELTER CONSIDERATIONS

There are currently no official guidelines for shelter settings, but there are things you can do right now to be ready for any emergency, and many of these same tips will help you prepare as the coronavirus situation continues to evolve in the U.S.

- Educate staff to recognize signs and symptoms of respiratory illnesses.
- Have handwashing/hand sanitizing supplies available (hand soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, paper hand towels).
- Provide facial tissues at entrances and in common areas.
- 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.
- Clean and sanitize frequently touched surfaces several times per shift. Pay special attention to doorknobs, elevator buttons, public phones, railings/handrails, tabletops
- Clean all common areas within the facility daily.
- Post signs around the facility to teach/remind staff and clients to practice good hygiene.

IF A CLIENT HAS SIGNS/SYMPTOMS OF ACUTE RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

Once a client has been identified as having a possible symptoms or risk factors through screening (travel within the past 14 days to an affected area or contact with an individual with a confirmed case), the client needs to be separated from other clients and staff members and then transferred to a hospital for evaluation.

Ask the client to wear a mask. If a client refuses to wear a mask, practice social distancing with the client and have staff members wear masks when interacting with the ill client. (Social distancing means remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding local public transportation (e.g., bus, subway, taxi, ride share), and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others.)

- Limit the number of other clients in contact with the ill client.
- The Local Health Department will assist with follow up of any clients or staff who may have been exposed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your healthcare provider/medical doctor

If a client presents with signs/symptoms for Coronavirus, please call the New Haven Health Department Emergency Number (203) 946-4949

For routine questions/issues, please call the New Haven Health Department Main Number

Telephone (203) 946-6999

<https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/health/default.htm>

CDC – Coronavirus Disease 2019

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

Connecticut Department of Public Health

<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Public-Health-Preparedness/Main-Page/2019-Novel-Coronavirus#Protect>

Coronavirus Resources for Homeless Providers

<https://t.e2ma.net/webview/e8jgcl/39270471477b06ca2ade3ef09d164068>