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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 your health and the health of those in your 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:
- Post signs at the entrance instructing visitors not to visit if they have symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Ensure sick leave policies allow employees to stay home if they have symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Assess residents' symptoms of respiratory infection upon admission to the facility and implement appropriate infection prevention practices for incoming symptomatic residents.
- Keep residents and employees informed.
  - Describe what actions the facility is taking to protect them, including answering their questions and explaining what they can do to protect themselves and their fellow residents.
- Monitor residents and employees for fever or respiratory symptoms.
  - Restrict residents with fever or acute respiratory symptoms to their room. If they must leave the room for medically necessary procedures, have them wear a facemask (if tolerated).

- In general, for care of residents with undiagnosed respiratory infection use Standard, Contact, and Droplet Precautions with eye protection unless suspected diagnosis requires Airborne Precautions (e.g., tuberculosis).
  - Healthcare personnel should monitor their local and state public health sources to understand COVID-19 activity in their community to help inform their evaluation of individuals with unknown respiratory illness. If there is transmission of COVID-19 in the community, in addition to implementing the precautions described above for residents with acute respiratory infection, facilities should also consult with public health authorities for additional guidance.
- Support hand and respiratory hygiene, as well as cough etiquette by residents, visitors, and employees.
  - Ensure employees clean their hands according to CDC guidelines, including before and after contact with residents, after contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment, and after removing personal protective equipment (PPE).
  - Put alcohol-based hand rub in every resident room (ideally both inside and outside of the room).
  - Make sure tissues are available and any sink is well-stocked with soap and paper towels for hand washing.
- Identify dedicated employees to care for COVID-19 patients and provide infection control training.
  - Guidance on implementing recommended infection prevention practices is available in CDC's free online course — The Nursing Home Infection Preventionist Training — which includes resources checklists for facilities and employees to use.
- Provide the right supplies to ensure easy and correct use of PPE.
  - Post signs on the door or wall outside of the resident room that clearly describe the type of precautions needed and required PPE.
  - Make PPE, including facemasks, eye protection, gowns, and gloves, available immediately outside of the resident room.
  - Position a trash can near the exit inside any resident room to make it easy for employees to discard PPE.

IF A STAFF MEMBER OR PATIENT HAS SYMPTOMS

Any staff member with symptoms should call their healthcare professional if they develop symptoms and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or have recently traveled from an area with widespread or ongoing community spread of COVID-19. See the CDC website for information on areas affected by Coronavirus. The Health Department can also assist with directing you to care.
Remind staff to call ahead before visiting their healthcare provider.

For patients presenting with symptoms, a medical provider should evaluate the patient as soon as possible while isolating the patient from other patients and staff.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If a patient or staff member has signs/symptoms consistent with Coronavirus, please call New Haven Health Department Emergency Line   (203) 946-4949

For routine questions/issues, please call the New Haven Health Department Main Number (203) 946-6999
Website: https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/health/default.htm
Information on other specific populations can be found on the New Haven Health Department website

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