



MONMOUTH COUNTY REGIONAL HEALTH COMMISSION NO.1

1540 WEST PARK AVENUE, SUITE 1, TINTON FALLS, NJ 07724

www.mcrhc.org, Facebook: www.facebook.com/MCRHCno.1, Twitter: #healthmcrhc

David A. Henry, MPH
Health Officer
Tel: (732) 493-9520
Fax: (732) 493-9521

Mailing Address:
1540 West Park Ave.
Suite 1
Ocean, NJ 07712

March 12, 2020

For Long Term Care Facilities

The Monmouth County Regional Health Commission No. 1 (MCRHC) is committed to prevent, track and mitigate emerging communicable diseases. We are working in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Health, local hospitals, medical providers, and schools, in a coordinated public health response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The MCRHC Communicable Disease Response Team is monitoring activities of the now pandemic coronavirus COVID-19, originating from Wuhan, China. We strongly recommend that all organizations review and update their emergency plans and consider ways to continue essential services if on-site operations must be reduced temporarily. We are particularly concerned about how a case of COVID-19 in Long Term care facilities might lead to the rapid spread of disease.

Symptoms and Transmission of COVID-19

Symptoms include mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Similar to influenza, the COVID-19 is spread when a sick person coughs or sneezes via respiratory droplets. Although, coronavirus do survive on surfaces for so it's important to note that the ease of spread from person-to-person is limited. We recommend posting signage for the public that ask the about symptoms and screening questions.

Guidance for Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides several recommendations for protecting long term care facilities' residents, healthcare personal, staff and visitors.

- Consider new policies and procedures for visitors
 - The ease of spread in a long-term care setting and the severity of illness from COVID-19 are main factors in discouraging visitation and screening visitors even before COVID-19 is identified in your facility. Facilities can also take the extra precaution to restrict visitors.
 - When allowed, ensure visitors perform hand-hygiene techniques and limit interactions with others in the settings.

- Educate and train
 - Your health care providers on sick leave policies, infection prevention and control measures, proper use of personal protective equipment
 - Facility-based personnel and volunteers on the importance of hand hygiene and infection control measures
 - Residents and families about COVID-19, actions your facility is taking and actions they can take to protect themselves
- Make available infection control supplies
 - Hand hygiene and respiratory supplies (soap, hand sanitizers, tissues, etc)
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be available and a trash can near the exit of a resident room
 - Environmental cleaning and disinfection supplies

The general strategies CDC recommends to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in LTCF are the same strategies used every day to detect and prevent the spread of other respiratory viruses like influenza.

The NJDOH is asking that all healthcare providers report all patients with suspected COVID19 and especially those in whom testing, in their clinical judgement, is likely to yield a COVID-19 diagnosis. Patients should be reported to the local health department in which the patient resides. Contact the Monmouth County Regional Health Commission No. 1 (or your local health department) to report the suspected case and determine next steps. To find your local health department's contact information [click here for an interactive map](#) or [click here to download N.J.'s Directory of Local Health Departments](#).

If you have a suspected case, wear the following personal protective equipment when in the same room as the patient:

- A N95 respirator mask
- Protective eye equipment (goggles or face shield mask) should be used within 6 feet of patient
- Gowns and gloves must be worn.

Should your facility suspect a resident may have COVID-19, contact a medical provider to provide an evaluation and notify the health department immediately and follow the [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with COVID-19 or Persons Under Investigation for COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings](#), which includes detailed information regarding recommended PPE, patient placement, and staff protections.

If COVID-19 is suspected, based on an evaluation of the resident or prevalence of COVID-19 in the community:

- Minimize chances of exposure.
- Adhere to standard and transmission-based precautions
- Determine patient placement
- Collect diagnostic respiratory specimens
- Manage visitor access and movement within facility
- Train and educate healthcare personnel and
- Implement Environmental Infection Control procedures

-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Outbreaks involving novel coronaviruses evolve quickly and recommendations from public health officials may change frequently as new information becomes available. Please visit [CDC/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus), and the [NJDOH](https://www.njdoh.org) to keep up-to-date. If you or your patients have immediate questions about the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, contact the 24-hour Hot Line at 1-800-222-1222.

For more health information visit our website at www.mcrhc.org.

Online Resources

- [NJDOH Protocol for Healthcare Providers and Local Health Departments](#)
- [NJDOH 2019-COVID-19 Key Message for LTCF](#)
- [CDC's COVID Webpage](#)

Sincerely,

David A. Henry

David A. Henry
Health Officer

Allenhurst
Brielle
Deal
Fair Haven

Interlaken
Little Silver
Loch Arbour
Middletown Township

Monmouth Beach
Ocean Township
Red Bank
Rumson

Sea Bright
Sea Girt
Shrewsbury Borough
Spring Lake

Spring Lake Heights
Tinton Falls
West Long Branch



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.