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## Coronavirus Information January 27, 2020

A coronavirus is a type of common virus that can infect your respiratory tract, and can spread much like cold viruses. They tend to circulate in the fall and winter. Almost everyone gets a coronavirus infection at least once in their lifetime, most likely as a young child.

Sometimes a novel (new) type of coronavirus emerges and begins infecting humans like in Wuhan, China. Since the coronavirus is new and people have not developed resistance to it, the virus is causing an outbreak of respiratory illness.

While the CDC considers this to be a serious public health concern, based on current information, **the immediate health risk from the 2019-nCoV to the general American public is considered low at this time.**

The Westfield Regional Health Department is working with the NJ Department of Health to monitor the situation closely and is proactively preparing guidance documents for health care professionals to be able to effectively respond to any cases that may be identified in the state.

The Westfield Regional Health Department is also working with state agencies to establish contacts should ill travelers be identified; is creating guidance documents for investigating and managing suspect cases and their contacts; and is evaluating and modifying current respiratory surveillance to assist in the detection of suspect cases.

It is recommended that individuals follow these public health guidelines, not just for Coronavirus, but also to prevent the spread of influenza:

- Prevent the spread of germs by covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue (then properly disposing of the tissue) or sleeve, not your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers, touching pets, and commonly used surfaces. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if

soap and water are not available. Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Stay home if you are sick and avoid sick people.
- Review and follow CDC travel advisories (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/novel-coronavirus-china>) when planning travel. If you become ill after returning home to the United States, call your healthcare provider before going to a doctor's office or emergency department of a hospital. They may want to place a mask on you before you enter the building to protect other people.

For more information visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention FAQ on Coronavirus website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html> or call the Westfield Regional Health Department at 908-789-4070.

**Providing Public Health and Environmental Services to  
Chatham Borough, Fanwood, Garwood, Mountainside,  
New Providence, Roselle Park, Summit and Westfield**