



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## COVID-19: Resources and Information For New Yorkers

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL March 14, 2020

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Here are some resources from the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) and NYC Health regarding the best practices as we face COVID-19.

### **Key Facts: COVID-19**

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can cause illnesses ranging from mild diseases, such as a cold, to more serious illnesses, such as pneumonia. Recently, a new coronavirus was detected that had not been previously seen in humans. The disease, called COVID-19, can be spread from person to person. CDC believes at this time that symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus. Most cases are likely to be spread from person to person by droplets when coughing.

There is now "community transmission" of COVID-19 in New York City, meaning the sources of new infections are unknown. There are no vaccines or specific treatments available for COVID-19. However, medicine and vaccine research is underway. New York has also ramped up COVID-19 testing capacity, and will soon be able to test up to 6,000 people daily.

To receive the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 in New York, I encourage you to use the following resources:

- Get NYC Health's COVID-19 text message: text "COVID" to 692-692 for English updates and "COVIDESP" to 692-692 for Spanish updates
- You can also call NYS DOH's COVID-19 hotline: 1-888-364-3065

### **Get The Facts: COVID-19 Symptoms & Prevention Strategies**

Symptoms of COVID-19 commonly include fever, cough or shortness of breath. Most people with COVID-19 have mild symptoms and fully recover without complications. An infection can result in death, but that is a rare outcome. People who are at most risk for severe illness are older adults or those who have chronic health conditions, such as:

- Lung disease
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- A weakened immune system

The following precautions can help you stay healthy. You do not need to wear a face mask if you are not feeling sick, unless you are instructed to do so by your health care provider.

- If you're feeling at all sick, STAY HOME.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often, for at least 20 seconds every time. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Get the flu vaccine, if you have not done so already.
- Do not touch your face unless you recently washed your hands.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing or coughing. Do not use your hands.

- Do not shake hands. Instead, wave or elbow bump.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- If you are an older adult or have any of the chronic health conditions listed above, avoid all unnecessary gatherings and events.

If you are planning any travel outside the U.S., [visit CDC's Travelers' Health](#) webpage for the latest travel notices. The federal government has imposed certain travel restrictions for those traveling to countries with a high number of individuals infected with COVID-19.

### **What To Do If You Feel Sick**

The most important thing to know: if you're feeling sick, STAY HOME. Stay home until you are fever-free for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing drugs, such as Tylenol and ibuprofen. If you have family or friends who are older adults or have chronic conditions, do not visit them.

For most New Yorkers, especially those who are not part of high-risk groups (e.g. senior citizens or those with chronic health disease), the appropriate response to feeling ill is "self monitoring." Self-monitoring means you stay home, regularly check yourself for fever, and remain alert for cough, shortness of breath or other cold or flu-like symptoms. If you have these symptoms you should not attend work, school, public events or group gatherings.

If you do not feel better in 24-48 hours, or if you have mild symptoms but are part of a high-risk group, contact your health care provider. You and your provider will decide if you need testing for COVID-19. Your provider may first perform other tests to rule out common illnesses. If you think you need to visit your doctor, be sure to call ahead first and talk to them about your symptoms—do NOT show up unannounced and risk infecting others in

the waiting room or office. In an emergency, call 911.

If you need help getting medical care or finding a health care provider, call 311. You can get care in NYC regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.

### **New Policies To Stop The Spread Of COVID-19**

New York State and NYC have both instituted new policies to promote "social distancing." While they may seem drastic, science clearly shows the most effective way to stop the spread of disease is to prevent people from gathering in large groups. As of March 17, 2020, you should know the following new rules:

- New York, New Jersey and Connecticut have announced new rules limiting large gatherings to a maximum of 50 people. The CDC has gone further, recommending all gatherings be limited to a maximum of 10 people.
- All restaurants and bars will be closed for dine-in service. They will still be able to serve take-out and delivery meals.
- All gyms, movie theaters, nightclubs and casinos are temporarily closed until further notice.
- Private employers should consider allowing employees to work from home or stagger their work hours.
- New Yorkers should also consider changing the way you travel throughout the city: walk or bike to work, if possible. And if your train or bus is too crowded, wait for the next one.

### **Taking Action In The State Senate**

As your State Senator, I'm working closely with my colleagues in the Legislature and at all levels of government to help New York get through this difficult time. I've announced three

new legislative efforts:

1. Stop Evictions And Foreclosures: At a time when public health experts recommend "social isolation" and staying indoors, it would be unconscionable to kick New Yorkers out of their homes. I've announced legislation with Senator Brian Kavanaugh to impose a moratorium on all evictions and foreclosures while we work to stop the spread of COVID-19.
2. Crack Down On Price Gouging: Many constituents are finding it difficult to find affordable medical supplies, like hand sanitizer and antibacterial wipes. I introduced legislation last week with Senator Tim Kennedy to allow the Attorney General to penalize any retailer, manufacturer or distributor who raises prices on consumer medical supplies by more than 10% during a public health emergency.
3. Protect Community Boards and CECs: Local governmental bodies, like Community Boards and Community Education Councils, are legally required to meet in public. But hosting large group events increases the risk of spreading COVID-19. I announced a bill to allow public bodies subject to the Open Meetings Law to meet through telecommunications or videoconference, rather than gathering in person.

My team and I are closely following this situation and will be monitoring phone and email correspondence seven days a week for the foreseeable future. I encourage you to contact [hoylman@nysenate.gov](mailto:hoylman@nysenate.gov) or leave a voice mail on our phone line, 212-633-8052. Please call 911 if you are dealing with a medical emergency.

My constituent services team in New York City has suspended in-person meetings will be working remotely during this public health emergency. If you have a meeting scheduled, or were interested in scheduling one for a future date, we will meet with you via conference call or a videoconferencing session.

## Resources For Daily Living In NYC

Many of our hard-working City and State agencies have their own response plans for COVID-19:

- *Transit*: the MTA is operating regular service and regularly cleaning/disinfecting stations to prevent the spread of disease. For the latest updates on their COVID-19 response, visit their website: <https://new.mta.info/precautions-against-coronavirus>
- *Judiciary*: The Office of Court Administration has instituted multiple new policies for attorneys, litigants, and potential jurors. Learn more here: <https://www.nycourts.gov/whatsnew/covid.shtml>
- *Public Schools*: NYC public schools are transitioning to a remote learning model, where students will stay home and attend classes virtually. All school buildings are now closed, but free breakfast and lunch will be available at grab-and-go stations outside every NYC Schools building. The Department of Education will continue posting updates at this website: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/health-and-wellness/coronavirus-update>
- *Small Businesses*: With many New Yorkers staying home and avoiding shops and restaurants, our small businesses will likely be hard-hit. If you own a small business, NYC's Department of Small Business Services offers these resources: [www.nyc.gov/covid19biz](http://www.nyc.gov/covid19biz)
- *NYCHA*: Residents of NYCHA should call the CCC at 718-707-7771 with any questions or concerns. NYCHA's General Manager has also shared this update on COVID-19 preparations: <https://nychajournal.nyc/update-from-nycha-chair-and-general-manager-on-covid-19-measures/>
- *Neighborhood Volunteering*: New Yorkers come together when times are tough. If you are not part of a high-risk group and are interesting in helping your neighbors who may be senior citizens or immunocompromised, please fill out this form my office has created:

<https://forms.gle/6W1SKHBZvZHLzajb7>

- *Medical Volunteering:* Governor Cuomo has asked retired medical professionals and individuals with administrative experience to volunteer in hospitals, walk-in clinics and other medical settings. If you are interested, please fill out this form from our office:

<https://forms.gle/xYjZLTdiqFEyB4bg7>