



HEALTH DISTRICT

## Portage County Combined General Health District

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Press release  
2019 novel Coronavirus

March 4, 2020

### ***What is Portage County doing to respond to 2019 novel Coronavirus?***

The Portage County Health District has been working with Kent City Health Department and its community partners for years to plan a strongly coordinated community response to public health emergencies using the national Incident Command Structure. The Incident Command Structure, including the Joint Information Center (JIC), is an efficient and well-planned way to prepare for and respond to public health and safety concerns.

In response to the public health concern of the 2019 novel Coronavirus, the Joint Information Center, or JIC, has been activated in Portage County.

- This means designated Information Officers at several community agencies come together to ensure we are communicating effectively between agencies and with the public about Coronavirus. This group also ensures that local residents, families, students, healthcare providers, and first responders have the most up-to-date information about Coronavirus.
- The JIC includes: Portage County Health District, Kent City Health Department, Kent State University, Hiram College, NEOMED, Portage County Emergency Management Agency, UH Portage Medical Center, AxessPointe, and local school systems.

### ***New information (as of 3/03/20) on Coronavirus:***

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH), in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local partners, is closely monitoring the 2019 novel (new) coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China.

- The virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2”.
- The disease it causes has been named “coronavirus disease 2019” (abbreviated “COVID-19”).

Due to community spread of the virus, CDC has issued Travel Health Notices of level 2 and 3 for multiple countries, including: **China, Iran, Italy, Japan, and South Korea** (as of February 28, 2020).

As of March 3, 2020, **there are no confirmed cases in Ohio, one person under investigation in Ohio, and 212 persons under public health supervision.** For the most up-to-date numbers for Ohio, go to <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/Novel-Coronavirus>.

The potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 is high, both globally and to the U.S. **Risk to the general public remains low**, and the CDC continues to recommend Americans use typical infectious disease precautions, just as those used to prevent cold or flu:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose, or eyes with unwashed hands.
- Cover coughs/sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are ill.
- Clean and disinfect all “high-touch” objects and surfaces every day.

The situation surrounding COVID-19 is constantly evolving. The most up-to-date numbers for the US can be found on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

### *What is novel Coronavirus?*

Novel Coronavirus is a virus strain that has only spread in people since December 2019. It likely came from an animal because the first cases were linked to a large seafood and animal market, suggesting a possible zoonotic origin to the outbreak.

### *How is it spread?*

The novel coronavirus is primarily spread through respiratory droplets, which means to become infected, people generally must be within six feet of someone who is contagious and have droplets land on them. Symptoms of coronavirus appear within two to 14 days after exposure and include fever, cough, runny nose and difficulty breathing. There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection.

### *What are the symptoms of coronavirus?*

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

### *How can I protect myself?*

If you are traveling overseas, follow the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Traveler’s Health guidance found at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>.

Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent novel coronavirus infections.

### *What you need to know:*

If you have recently traveled to **China, Iran, Italy, Japan, and South Korea** or other outbreak areas and you have symptoms of novel coronavirus (fever, cough, difficulty breathing), **seek medical care right away. Call your healthcare provider BEFORE arriving and tell them your symptoms and travel history.**

Additional information on the Coronavirus, including resources for health care workers, community and faith-based organizations, etc. can be found on the Portage County Health District website at [www.portagehealth.net](http://www.portagehealth.net), the Ohio Department of Health website at: <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/home> and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.