



Public Health
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Frederick County Health Department

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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CORONAVIRUS PREPAREDNESS FOR PEOPLE AT HIGHER RISK

FREDERICK, MD – The Frederick County Health Department (FCHD) is working closely with Frederick County Senior Services Division to prepare our community for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). These agencies work closely with groups of people who are at higher risk for getting COVID-19 and are taking extra steps to educate individuals and organizations like long-term care and senior centers on how to prepare for and reduce exposure to the novel coronavirus.

People who have a higher risk of getting very sick from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) include:

- Older adults (especially 60 years and older)
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung disease

“What we know about this new virus so far is that older people and people with chronic health conditions seem to be more susceptible to it,” said Dr. Barbara Brookmyer, Health Officer at the Frederick County Health Department. “It’s important for these individuals or anyone who is a caretaker for someone to take steps now to prepare to be affected by COVID-19 in our community. Governor Hogan announced on March 9 that these individuals should stay home as much as possible and avoid large crowds to reduce the chance of getting sick.”

Kathy Schey, Director of the Frederick County Senior Services Division, supported the need to take action now. “There are some easy things that people can do to prepare

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themselves and their loved ones. Make sure you have enough medicine, food, and household items on hand, including pet supplies. Check in with your neighbors and family and make sure they're taking steps to prepare, too."

Here are some steps people in higher risk groups and their caregivers should take:

- Stock up on supplies, including over-the-counter medicine, food, and household items
- Order prescription medicines in advance. Cost-sharing is waived due to [Governor Hogan's directive](#) from March 6th.
- When you go out in public, **keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.**
- Avoid crowds as much as possible.
- Avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel.
- Stay in touch with others by phone or email. Ask for help from friends, family, neighbors, community health workers, etc. if you become sick.
- Make a plan for who can provide you with care if your caregiver gets sick.
- For people in the workforce, ask your employer about additional workplace precautions and work from home options to limit exposure. Please check [CDC's Resources for Businesses and Employers](#)

For caregivers or people who work with older people:

- Know what medications your loved one is taking and see if you can help them have extra on hand.
- Monitor food and other medical supplies (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care) needed and create a back-up plan.
- Stock up on non-perishable food and household items to have on hand in your home to minimize trips to stores.
- If you care for a loved one living in a care facility, monitor the situation, ask about the health of the other residents frequently and know the protocol if there is an outbreak.

Residences and facilities should:

- Post signs asking visitors to not enter if they are sick.
- Offer alternate means for people to access services that would limit their contact with others. For example, deliver or drive-through meals, videotape or livestream classes.
- Long-term care facilities should be vigilant to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19. [Information for long-term care facilities can be found here](#)

Stay informed from reputable sources. Get more information from CDC: [People at Risk for Serious Illness from COVID-19](#)

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