



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**City of St. Joseph**  
**Health Department**

## **P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

City of St. Joseph Health Department  
904 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Joseph, MO 64503

Media inquiries contact Stephanie Malita at 816-271-5327

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### PREPARATIONS FOR CORONAVIRUS-2019 IN BUCHANAN COUNTY AND REGION

The City of St. Joseph Health Department is working with officials on local, state and regional levels to monitor the evolution of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States and particularly in our region of the country. As local organizations and businesses review response plans given the possibility of an outbreak and its impact, the health department is offering guidance and is hosting informational meetings for specific sectors. The first of these meetings will be geared to the needs of faith-based groups and businesses. Additional meetings will be scheduled which will focus on specific needs in the community.

The health department is in communication daily with officials to coordinate an effective response. Review of plans which have been in place in preparation for just such an event are being vetted for feasibility based on resources, the readiness of community members, and projected impact. The department continues to inform the public as developments occur.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask:
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.
  - The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

For information about handwashing, see CDC's Handwashing website

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>

These are everyday habits that can help prevent the spread of several viruses.

CDC does have specific guidance for travelers at

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/warning/novel-coronavirus-china>.

If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you may be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community:

- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home.
- Call ahead before visiting your doctor.
- Wear a facemask when around others.
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Clean hands often.
- Avoid sharing personal household items such as cups, utensils, towels, etc.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day.
- Monitor symptoms.
- Keep your medical providers informed.

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low, which will be determined case-by-case and follow the recommendations of your primary care provider and public health officials.

Please contact the City of St. Joseph Health Department for additional information at [stjoemo.info/912/COVID-19-Coronavirus](https://stjoemo.info/912/COVID-19-Coronavirus) or by calling 816-271-4725.

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