



ST. MARY'S COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Meenakshi G. Brewster, MD, MPH - Health Officer

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Environmental Health: 301 – 475 – 4321
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Email: smchd.healthdept@maryland.gov

March 4, 2020

Local Business Owners/Employers:

This communication is to assist you with preparedness activities related to the quickly evolving worldwide epidemic of novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). As you may know, the situation related to COVID-19 is escalating with new U.S. states and residents affected nearly daily. At the time of this communication, there are no identified cases of COVID-19 in St. Mary's County or in Maryland. However, we do anticipate that this will change as the epidemic continues to grow and testing criteria expands.

Communication is key in this stage of preparedness. Updates, information and resources will be posted regularly for community members, healthcare providers and local businesses on the St. Mary's County Health Department (SMCHD) website at: www.smchd.org/coronavirus. Please consider encouraging your employees to get information from this site and other reliable public health sources, including:

- The Maryland Department of Health: <http://health.maryland.gov/coronavirus>
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

If you have not already done so, I urge you to keep your employees informed about your organization's preparedness for COVID-19. Please also **encourage infection prevention strategies such as hand-washing, staying home when sick, and paying attention to travel warnings issued by the CDC**. Please consider reviewing the CDC-issued [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#) for planning activities related to COVID-19.

I encourage your team to include the following considerations as you prepare:

- Review and update as needed, your organization's Emergency Operations Plan (particularly infectious disease protocols) and Continuity of Operations Plan (how your critical functions would continue during high rates of absenteeism)
- Consider telework and flexible sick leave policies that encourage persons who are ill to stay home and away from others
- Separate sick employees: The CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home so as not to expose others to illness
- Post signage in your buildings with information about preventing spread of COVID-19 (examples in English and Spanish attached) at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen
- Review with or remind employees of proper procedure for handwashing with soap and water and encourage frequent handwashing, particularly prior to food consumption or after use of bathrooms

- Consider making available in your workspaces and customer areas alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol (automatic dispensers may be optimal)
- Perform routine environmental cleaning
- Consider travel guidance from the CDC for employees who may be traveling - this guidance may be updated often so please check regularly: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/
- Some considerations to keep in mind as you plan future large group events or meetings - CDC travel guidance, areas most impacted by local transmission of coronavirus, the use of virtual meetings/webinar formats where feasible, and postponement of planned events
- Instead of handshakes and hugs, consider advising your employees to use non-contact forms of greetings with colleagues and customers
- Encourage sick employees to stay home and not expose others to illness

If you have additional questions or concerns, please reach out to SMCHD at: smchd.healthdept@maryland.gov. Again, we will keep updated information and resources available at: www.smchd.org/coronavirus.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Meenakshi G. Brewster, MD, MPH
St. Mary's County Health Officer

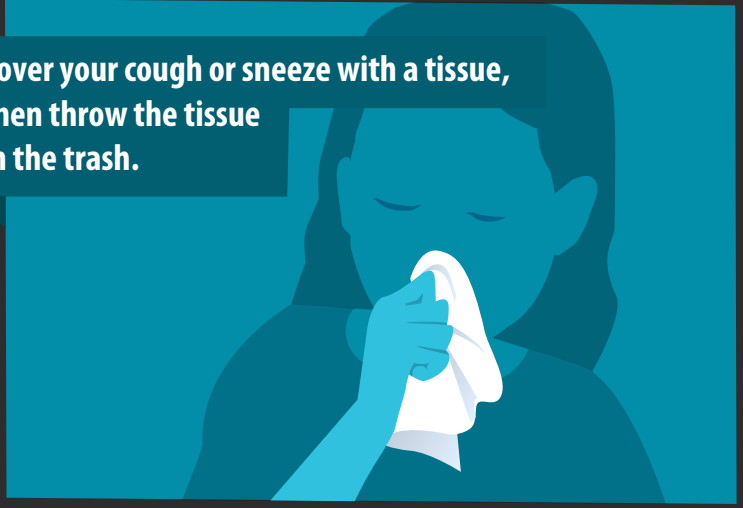
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

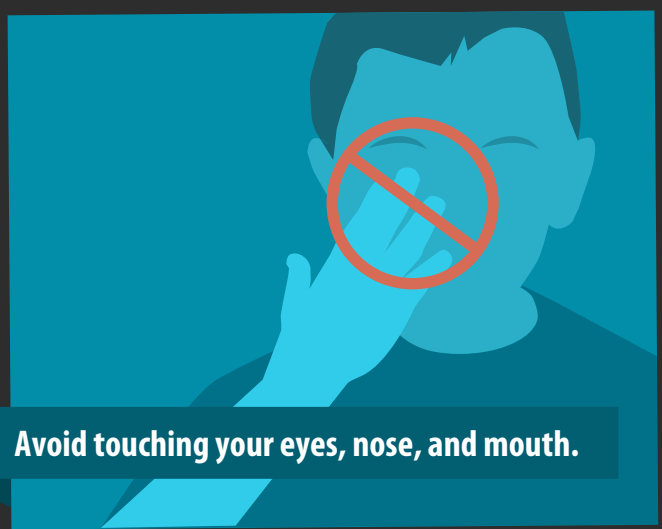
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

Ayude a prevenir la propagación de virus respiratorios como el nuevo COVID-19.

Evite el contacto cercano con las personas enfermas.



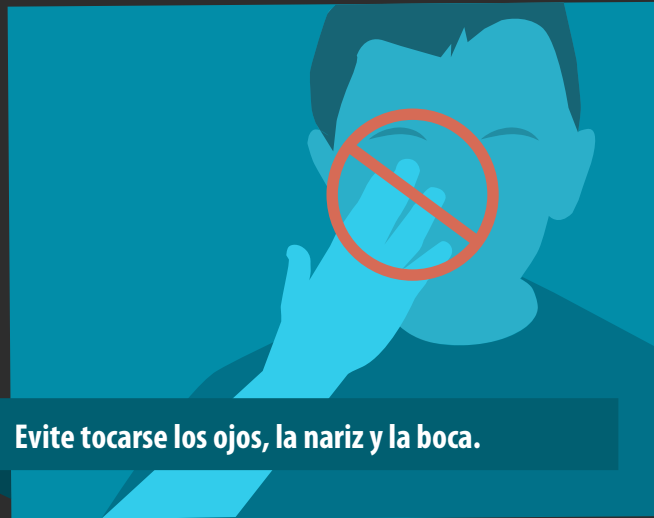
Cúbrase la nariz y la boca con un pañuelo desechable al toser o estornudar y luego bótelos a la basura.



Limpie y desinfecte los objetos y las superficies que se tocan frecuentemente.



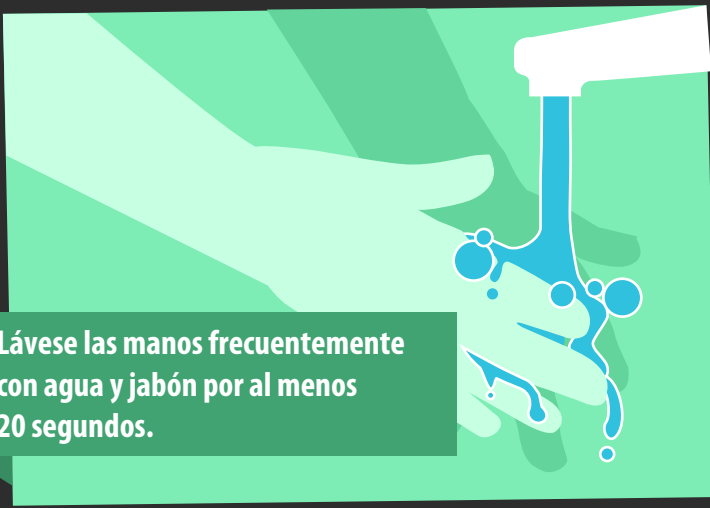
Evite tocarse los ojos, la nariz y la boca.



Quédese en casa si está enfermo, excepto para buscar atención médica.



Lávese las manos frecuentemente con agua y jabón por al menos 20 segundos.



Para obtener más información: www.cdc.gov/COVID19-es