

Town of Acton

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Town of Acton Reminds Residents Risk of Coronavirus Remains Low

Health Officials Offer General Illness and Flu Prevention Tips

ACTON -- As federal and state health officials continue to monitor the spread of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) internationally, Town Manager John Mangiaratti and Health Director Sheryl Ball wish to remind residents that the risk of catching the virus remains low.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) contracting the flu is far more likely than COVID-19. The DPH announced the state's first, and currently only, case of the the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on Feb. 1. The man who contracted the virus was returning from Wuhan, China and sought medical care shortly after his arrival in the state.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) confirmed Wednesday](#) that a new patient in California has contracted COVID-19, however, and may be the first case of community spread of the virus in the United States.

"Federal health officials have kept an incredibly close eye on coronavirus and cases of the virus in the United States, and at this time, the risk of residents in our area of contracting COVID-19 is low," Ball said. "The flu, however, has impacted thousands of Massachusetts residents this season, and we want residents to take precautions to stay healthy. Take care to wash your hands frequently, cover your cough, and stay home when sick."

The Town of Acton is additionally partnering with the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District to ensure the town is prepared in the event a case of the virus is identified or suspected in the community.

As of Feb. 3, only 11 airports have been accepting travelers from mainland China in the U.S., none of which are in Massachusetts, according to the DPH. Those arriving at those airports are also being screened for the virus.

According to the [CDC](#), symptoms of the virus appear 2-14 days of exposure. The DPH reports that symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath and pneumonia in severe cases.

At this time, the DPH is not recommending people wear masks in public as the risk to the public remains low and there is no substantial evidence suggesting wearing a mask protects an individual outside of preventing someone from spreading a respiratory illness to others in a clinic waiting room.

In an effort to prevent the spread of flu, colds and other respiratory illnesses, the Town of Acton wishes to provide residents with recommended actions from the DPH:

- Wash hands frequently, with soap and water, for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- When sick yourself, stay home to protect others.
- Always cover your cough or sneeze

For more information, visit the DPH's website by [clicking here](#) and the CDC's website by [clicking here](#).

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