

**Note: The scientific community's understanding of COVID-19 has been changing rapidly and will continue to do so. The Maine CDC Drinking Water Program will attempt to stay current with new information as it comes in. Please refer to the "Resources" and "Q&A Sheet References" sections below for additional information.**

**COVID-19 Q & A:**

**1) Question: Can COVID-19 be spread through drinking water?**

Answer: According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 has not been detected in drinking water and at this time there is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through drinking water systems. If Covid-19 were present in the water, regular water treatment methods using filtration and disinfection should remove or inactivate the virus.

**2) Question: Is COVID-19 spreading through sewage systems?**

Answer: According to the CDC, at this time the risk of transmission through sewage systems is thought to be low.

**3) Question: Do waste management companies need any additional protection when handling untreated waste from a COVID-19 positive patient?**

Answer: As a precaution, wastewater and sewage workers should use standard practices that include basic hygiene precautions and use personal protective equipment as currently prescribed for work tasks.

**4) Question: What can I do to help reduce the possible spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses?**

Answer:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose with unwashed hands;
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze with a tissue or by coughing or sneezing into your upper sleeve, not your hands; and
- Stay home when you're sick and avoid close contact with others.

**5) Question: Is a private well safe from COVID-19 contamination?**

Answer: EPA expects a properly managed septic system to treat COVID-19 the same way it safely manages other viruses often found in wastewater. Additionally, when properly installed, a septic system is located at a distance and location designed to avoid impacting a water supply well. If in doubt regarding the functionality of your septic system, test water from your well for bacteria at a water quality testing laboratory. A positive result for bacteria may indicate contamination. Please contact Haig Brochu of the Maine CDC Drinking Water Program at 207.592.3190 for private well questions.

**Resources:**

For additional resources and up-to-date information, you may refer to the following websites' informational pages:

1. Maine CDC: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus.shtml>
2. US CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
3. US EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-drinking-water-and-wastewater>
4. World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
5. American Water Works Association: <https://www.awwa.org/AWWA-Articles/coronavirus-and-water>
6. Association of State and Territorial Health Officials: <https://www.astho.org/COVID-19/>
7. Association of State Drinking Water Administrators: <https://www.asdwa.org/covid19/>

**Q&A Sheet References:**

1. U.S. CDC: Municipal Water and COVID-19 (last updates March 10, 2020)  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>
2. World Health Organization – UNICEF: Water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management for the COVID-19 virus (technical brief) (March 3, 2020) Sections 1.2-1.4.  
<https://www.who.int/publications-detail/water-sanitation-hygiene-and-waste-management-for-covid-19>
3. American Water Works Association: Coronavirus and water (updated February 28, 2020)  
<https://www.awwa.org/AWWA-Articles/coronavirus-and-water>