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PRESS RELEASE

**IMPORTANT TIPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF WHILE
RUNNING ESSENTIAL ERRANDS**

(Toms River) – Leaving the safety of home and going out to shop for essential household items is creating new challenges for us all as we continue to learn how to adjust our typical routines during the COVID-19 outbreak.

“For most of us there is no way getting around going out to buy groceries and run other essential errands such as banking, take-out food orders or doctor visits,” explained Daniel Regenye, Ocean County Health Department Public Health Coordinator/Health Officer. “The only way to accomplish these tasks and feel safe from catching the COVID-19 virus is to strictly adhere to following all the social distancing measures. We’ve been sharing the measures from the very beginning but now the Ocean County Health Department feels it’s time for a second push to get the message out as we face new challenges.”

The following are some tips on how to meet your essential shopping needs;

- Stay home if you’re sick!
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others while shopping and in lines.
- Wear a face covering. Latex gloves are not recommended to wear when grocery shopping.
- Make a list and shop quickly.
- Shop alone, don’t bring the family.
- Sanitize carts and hands, before and after shopping.
- Give the cashier some space or use the self-checkout.
- Choose no-touch payment when you can.
- If you are at higher risk for severe illness, find out if stores have special hours for people at high risk.
- Wash your hands before shopping and as soon as you get home with soap and water.

“It may be a bit of an inconvenience but following these guidelines can really help save lives,” said Ocean County Freeholder Gerry P. Little, Liaison to the Ocean County Board of Health. “We really are all in this together. Let’s not only think about protecting ourselves but let’s follow these measures for our neighbors and community while we attend to these essential errands.”

What about protecting ourselves from running other essential errands such as paying bills, doctor’s visits, postage and deliveries or picking up prescriptions? OCHD provides the following guidelines;

- Avoid crowds. Go to the bank, post office or pharmacy during times when fewer people will be there (i.e. early morning or later in the night.)
- Bank on-line whenever possible. If you do visit a bank make sure to clean the ATM machine with a disinfecting wipe before use.

- Order groceries and other goods on-line for home delivery. (Make sure to plan ahead as some deliveries may take a week or longer).
- Utilize curbside pickup.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol after collecting your mail or accepting deliveries.
- Use telemedicine or communicate with your doctor by phone or email if possible.
- Reschedule procedures that are not urgently needed.
- Use the drive thru when picking up medicines. Try to pick up all your medicine at one time if possible.

“The measures haven’t changed as much as the evolving scenarios we all have to adjust to. That means we need to keep coming up with new and improvisational plans and protocols to help mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus and keeping our residents safe and sound,” added Regenye.

For more information regarding COVID-19 guidelines please visit the OCHD website at www.ochd.org. The OCHD is also providing a general COVID-19 Information Call Hot Line for residents and clinicians to answer questions regarding the coronavirus. The number is 732-341-9700 ext. 7411.

The NJDOH hotline is available for questions around the clock at 1-800-222-1222 or by dialing 2-1-1.

Additional information can be found at:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/summary.html>
or New Jersey Department of Health website at:
<https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>

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