



Costa Mesa Sanitary District

....an Independent Special District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AN UPDATE FROM CMSD ON COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) & THE DISTRICT'S COMMITMENT TO ENSURING PUBLIC HEALTH

(Costa Mesa, CA) – A March 17 article in the [Orange County Register](#) reported that the novel Coronavirus might be carried in raw sewage and includes a statement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that "...the virus that causes COVID-19 has been detected in the feces of some patients diagnosed with COVID-19, but is not yet known whether the virus in the stool is infectious."

Unfortunately, this Register story failed to include that in the CDC Guidance for Water and Wastewater Systems, the agency believes the risk of transmission of COVID-19 from feces of an infected person is low, based on data from previous outbreaks of coronavirus, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

"As the Register story states, the CDC reports there have been no cases of fecal-oral transmission of COVID-19 to date," said CMSD General Manager, Scott Carroll.

Further indication that the probability of infection is low comes from [ScienceNews](#), Carroll said. A team of researchers studying nine people who contracted the virus in Germany said that while they detected viral RNA (the virus's genetic material) in feces, there was no infectious virus, which suggests that the novel coronavirus isn't spread through stool.



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Regardless of whether or not wastewater can transmit COVID-19, Carroll points out, the public needs to be aware that direct exposure to wastewater is still hazardous because it carries bacteria and disease such as E. coli, shigellosis, typhoid fever, salmonella, and cholera.

“Costa Mesa Sanitary District employees, and the countless other wastewater professionals in Orange County, are dedicated professionals who are out in the streets every day to ensure wastewater does not back up into people’s homes and businesses,” said CMSD Board President James Ferryman. “They are practicing basic hygiene precautions and wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) as prescribed for current work tasks to safeguard the community from all hazards associated with wastewater.”

NO WIPES IN PIPES. The Costa Mesa Sanitary District and all wastewater professionals countywide are reminding and encouraging members of the public to refrain from flushing “disposable wipes” down the toilet. The recent and temporary scarcity of toilet paper prompted consumers to resort to disposable or flushable wipes as an alternative. However, even though the wipes are described as “flushable” they do not break down like regular toilet paper and, therefore, clog wastewater systems and damage home plumbing. The public is reminded to remember the ‘3 Ps’ – pee, poop and (toilet) paper – when flushing the toilet.

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About the Costa Mesa Sanitary District: Formed in 1944, the Costa Mesa Sanitary District (CMSD) is an independent special district that provides solid waste and wastewater collection services to a population of approximately 116,700 in Costa Mesa, Newport Beach, and unincorporated Orange County. For more information and the latest CMSD news, visit www.cmsdca.gov and follow CMSD on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). To get in touch with CMSD staff, email info@cmsdca.gov or call (949) 645-8400.