



Ford County Public Health Department

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February 27, 2020

For Immediate Release

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Ford County Public Health Department Encourages Residents to Stay Informed and

Take Every Day Preventative Steps during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outbreak

COVID-19 Update

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus named severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. Currently, however, this virus is NOT spreading in communities in the United States and the health risk to the general public remains low in both the U.S. and in Illinois.

What are the symptoms?

People who get sick with COVID-19 develop mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- fever
- cough
- difficulty breathing

COVID-19 symptoms are similar to those of influenza (the flu), and the current outbreak is occurring during a time of year when respiratory illnesses from the flu and other viruses are highly prevalent.

Who should be tested for COVID-19?

Individuals who have the symptoms listed above AND have traveled to China or countries with apparent community spread OR have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 should be seen by a doctor or medical professional. Before seeking medical care, they should consult with their provider to make arrangements to prevent possible transmission in the health care setting.

What Steps Can be Taken to Protect Yourself and Your Family?

Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. Because COVID-19 has not been found to be spreading widely in the U. S., there are no additional precautions recommended for the general public to take. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, there are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19 and seasonal flu.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- When possible, stay home when you are sick except to get medical care.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, faucets, phones, and keyboards using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

While COVID-19 is a public health concern, Ford County Public Health Department (FCPHD) wants to remind residents that avoiding the flu and spreading it should also be a top priority. It is never too late to get a flu shot. FCPHD offers the flu vaccine by appointment which can be arranged by contacting FCPHD's office at (217) 379-9281.

For the most current information on COVID-19, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website. Additionally, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) in coordination with the Illinois Poison Control Center launched the Illinois Novel Coronavirus Hotline. Illinoisans can dial 1-800-889-3931 twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week or email DPH.SICK@ILLINOIS.GOV to get their questions answered.