



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 18, 2020

COVID-19 Joint Press Communication Update

The Crisis Communication Team would like to report that, at the time of this press release, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the Macon County. Thus far, three tests have been completed for Macon County residents, with two negative test results and one pending test result.

What to Do if You Are Experiencing Symptoms

If you are experiencing possible COVID-19 symptoms, please do not go to the emergency room. Per the CDC, "Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure." *All community residents*, whether experiencing symptoms or not, should be taking preventative measures to assist with preventing the spread of illness. A negative test does not mean that someone will not eventually develop symptoms, so all people should be taking proactive measures.

If you experience symptoms, first call your primary care physician. If you do not have a primary care physician in place at this time, you may call DMH Medical Group at (217) 876-2856, Crossing Healthcare at (217) 877-9117 or SIU at (217) 872-3800. HSHS Medical Group Family Medicine Forsyth is also operating a regional respiratory hub. Their hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, and Saturday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please call ahead at (217) 872-0953. Patients and visitors to healthcare facilities should be prepared to be screened before entering.

Daily PSA: Quarantine vs. Isolation

If you have been exposed to COVID-19 through travel to a high-risk area or personal contact with a person who has the virus, you should be under quarantine, even if you don't have any symptoms. Quarantine means limiting contact with other people and only leaving the home when necessary.

People with confirmed cases of COVID-19 should remain in isolation to protect others from getting the virus. Isolation means complete separation from other people as much as possible. Isolated people should not leave their home and should avoid contact with others in their household.

If you have had limited contact with a person under quarantine, you do not have to go into quarantine yourself, but you should stay away from others as much as possible. "Limited contact" is defined as being at least six feet apart from the quarantined person for 10 minutes to up to two hours. If you have had contact with an individual under isolation, you should be quarantined.

What happens if my family is quarantined or isolated?

If an entire household is isolated, the Macon County Health Department staff and its partners will work to ensure that the family has an adequate supply of food and medicine. Community members are urged to dial the local 2-1-1 number for information on assistance in attaining necessary items during this uncertain time. When a household has a mix of isolated individuals and quarantined individuals, one quarantined individual may leave the household for an hour to secure food, medicine and other essential supplies. This protocol applies to the household even if an isolated individual is in the hospital.

How should patients be isolated at home?

- The isolated person should avoid contact with other members of the household, including pets.
- If possible, the isolation area should be separated from the rest of the household by a door. The patient should have a separate bedroom and a separate bathroom stocked with disposable towels.
- All shared bathrooms should be equipped with cleaning supplies. If anyone else in the household becomes ill, anyone who shared the bathroom with that person should be considered at risk for infection.
- Food should be brought to the isolated person's quarters. That person should not eat meals with the rest of the household.
- Garbage should be bagged and left outside the isolated person's quarters for routine pickup.
- Healthy people in the household should monitor themselves continually for elevated temperature and other symptoms with public health supervision at determined.

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