



Lee County Health Department

For Immediate Release

Date: March 20, 2020

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As the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases increase in Iowa, we encourage all community members to look to the trusted sources for up-to-date information. The health care professionals at the Lee County Health Department, Fort Madison Community Hospital, and UnityPoint Health-Keokuk are committed to helping you understand how you can help keep yourself, your family and our community safe during this public health disaster.

We are all following the guidelines given to use by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to determine who will be tested for COVID-19. We are not doing random testing for the virus at this time. Currently there is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19.

The symptoms for COVID-19 share similarities with other circulating viruses including the seasonal flu. The main symptoms used to screen for COVID-19 include fever and respiratory symptoms -like a cough or difficulty breathing. Testing is only being done if specific criteria are met including travel, contact with confirmed cases, symptoms, and severity of illness.

Around 80% of Iowans infected with COVID-19 will experience only a mild to moderate illness. Most people with mild to moderate illness will NOT need to go to their healthcare provider to be seen and will NOT need be tested to confirm they have COVID-19. Recommendations from state health officials encourages people with mild illness to just stay home and isolate themselves from others in their home. With mild illness, there is no need to go to the ER or take the risk of spreading the virus to others by visiting a health care facility. There is no known treatment for this virus but you can manage the symptoms with basic symptom management such as a fever reducing medication, over-the-counter cough suppressant and use of a humidifier.

Self-isolation should continue until you are fever free without the use of fever-reducing medication for at least 72 hours **AND** other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved) **AND** at least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

Even if you not experiencing any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19, we ask you to self-isolate at home away from others and pets for **14 days total** if you:

- Returned from a cruise anywhere in the world in the last 14 days
- Traveled internationally to a country with a level 3 travel warning in the last 14 days
- Live with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19.

There are many ways you as members of our community can help us keep this virus in check.

- Call ahead –if you feel you need to be seen by a health care provider because you are sick, call first for guidance on what you should do. Also, if you are self-isolating and your fever is uncontrolled with fever-reducing medication or you have trouble breathing, call your provider first before coming to the facility. If you have chest pains, call 9-1-1.
- Be patient and understand we want to be fully prepared to care for our sickest patients if COVID-19 comes to Lee County.

Finally, the best defense is the first line of defense, follow these proven tips to keep you and your family healthy:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time or use hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow/upper arm. Throw away the tissue and wash your hands again.
- Stay home when ill.
- Keep your hands away from your face. Your eyes, nose and mouth are doorways for germs into your body.
- Avoid crowds, gatherings with 10 or more people and practice social distancing – keep at least 6 feet apart when at work and if you have to go out into the community.
- Help protect our elderly and those with high-risk health conditions.

Please do your part in protecting yourself, family, neighbors, our workforce, our fellow community members, and especially our most vulnerable.

You encourage you to use the following resources for more information:

idph.iowa.gov

www.cdc.gov

leecountyhd.org

www.fmchosp.com – 1-800-871-3313

<https://www.unitypoint.org/keokuk/default.aspx> - (319) 524-7150

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