

PRESS RELEASE

Mercer County Health Department
305 W Main St
Princeton MO 64673

Media inquiries contact Gina Finney, RN, BSN, ADM

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MERCER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT MONITOR COVID-19 SITUATION

The Mercer County Health Department is working with local, state and federal officials to monitor the evolution of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States and particularly in our region of the country. Currently, Missouri has only one confirmed COVID-19 case, in St. Louis and there are currently no cases in Harrison County as of today, March 12th. There are currently a number of cases in neighboring states including Nebraska, Kansas and Iowa.

As local organizations and businesses review response plans given the possibility of an outbreak and its impact, the health department is encouraging all families to know what to do to avoid becoming ill, what to do if you become ill, and how best to prepare your household for potential disruptions to your home.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask:
 - o CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - o Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- 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 readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

For information about handwashing, see CDC's Handwashing website <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>

These are everyday habits that can help prevent the spread of several viruses.

CDC does have specific guidance for travelers at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/.../not.../warning/novel-coronavirus-china>.

If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you may be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community:

- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home.

- Call ahead before visiting your doctor.
- Wear a facemask when around others.
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Clean hands often.
- Avoid sharing personal household items such as cups, utensils, towels, etc.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day.
- Monitor symptoms
- Keep your medical providers informed.

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low, which will be determined case-by-case and follow the recommendations of your primary care provider and public health officials.

For up to date information please follow the Mercer County Health Department on facebook or watch our website for updated information at www.mercercountyhealthdepartment.com

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