

Mar. 9, 2020

PROTECT AGAINST RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES, INCLUDING COVID-19



Contact:

Media Desk: 850-595-6500 x6000

Pensacola, Fla. – Spring break is here. The Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (FDOH-Escambia) encourages our residents and visitors to take steps to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. It is important for everyone to be play their part in protecting against the spread of influenza, coronavirus, or similar diseases:

- Wash your hands frequently 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.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) does not recommend that people who are well use a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.

The symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. However, these symptoms may also indicate other diseases of the respiratory system. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, contact your health care provider.

It is important to remember that most cases of COVID-19 are mild and patients will recover; however, the illness can be serious in individuals who suffer from chronic medical conditions that may compromise their immune systems and may lead to hospitalization or death. It is important to contact your health care provider if you have symptoms and have been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 or if you have traveled to a country that has been impacted by the virus.

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) works continuously with all our community partners to ensure that everyone is prepared in the eventuality of infectious disease spread. Please visit the Department's dedicated COVID-19 webpage at www.FloridaHealth.gov/COVID-19. The webpage remains the best and most up-to-date resource for information and guidance regarding COVID-19 in Florida.

For any other questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, please contact the Department's dedicated COVID-19 Call Center by calling **1-866-779-6121** or emailing COVID-19@flhealth.gov. **The Call Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

The CDC also has a website with information related to COVID-19:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

###

About the Florida Department of Health

The Florida Department of Health, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyEscambia](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.