

Public Information Release

Coronavirus Reopening Update for Preble County

April 29, 2020

Preble County citizens and Ohioans alike are anxiously, and somewhat tentatively, awaiting the reopening of the state after the Governor's announcement of his "Responsible Restart Ohio" plans this week. However, COVID-19 is still in Ohio communities. The plan is to reopen slowly to prevent sustained increases of COVID-19 cases. Governor DeWine communicated that reopening will consist of one or two openings followed by a 3-5 week watch period. If those openings do not cause a significant increase in cases, then the next set of openings will be carefully rolled-out.

"A lot of what happens after May 1 will be based on continuous risk assessment," said Health Commissioner Erik Balster. "Gradual and precise moves will be made followed by watch periods. This is how we will balance 'normal life' with the threat still at hand. We cannot pretend the threat is over. People in Ohio are still getting very sick and dying. We still need to act responsibly in our community."

On May 1st outpatient healthcare procedures can resume along with the opening of dental and veterinary offices. Manufacturing, distribution, construction, and general offices can open on May 4th. Retail stores and services are permitted to reopen on May 12th.

Ohio can expect practices like social distancing, mask wearing, and frequent hand washing to be around for a while. Businesses are asked to follow best practices and responsible protocols to keep employees and customers safe, including:

1. **Recommend face coverings** for employees and clients/customers at all times.
2. **Conduct daily assessments** to determine if employees are "fit for duty" by being symptom-free.
3. **Maintain good hygiene** by washing hands frequently and practice social distancing.
4. **Clean and sanitize** the workplace throughout the day and when the business closes for the day.
5. **Limit capacity** to meet **social distancing** guidelines.

Continued closures include schools, dine-in restaurants, hair salons, movie theaters, playgrounds, and gyms. Gatherings of 10 or more people are still not allowed. Festivals and mass gatherings will be the last thing to be reinstated because they are the biggest threat to large spikes in COVID-19 cases. Commissioner Balster cautions people on doing too much too quickly. "Staying at home and quarantining has been really tough economically, socially, and mentally. But we need to go slow. Wear face coverings and practice social distancing when you can, especially with those who are high-risk," Balster said.

PCPH encourages residents to monitor preblecountyhealth.org/coronavirus for the latest information on the Governor's order for reopening Ohio and to find the latest on COVID-19 in Preble County.

Get accurate local data on our website at preblecountyhealth.org on social media (@preblecountyhealth). Connect with us at 937-472-0087 or at info@preblecountyhealth.org. You may also call ODH COVID-19 Hotline for questions at 1-833-4ASK-ODH.