

Public Information Release

For Immediate Release: March 28, 2020

COVID-19 in Preble County Confirmed

Preble County Public Health (PCPH) is reporting the first confirmed COVID-19 case in the county. The patient is a 69 year old Preble County resident. PCPH will not be releasing any additional demographic information relating to any cases to protect the privacy of the individual during this time of illness.

PCPH is working with the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to conduct contact tracing to determine if any of the patient's close contacts are sick. Those contacts who are sick will be isolated at home and remain in touch with their doctor. All people in contact with the person who tested positive for COVID19 will stay home for 14 days. For those contacts who are not sick, guidance is being provided to monitor themselves for sickness and what to do if they should get sick. If you have not been in contact with the individual and are not called by health department staff, your risk is low.

"We know now that COVID-19 is in Preble County. Now more than ever the community should continue to protect themselves," said Health Commissioner Erik Balster. "People need to stay at home as much as possible to limit their exposures. At this point, you should not be out unless it is necessary."

According to ODH and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) areas of the United States including Ohio are experiencing "community spread" of the virus that causes COVID-19. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area where there is no travel history to other affected areas. Experts from both ODH and CDC expect the number of cases nationwide to continue to increase.

Prevention is still the best tool for COVID-19 across Ohio. "We talk about prevention all the time," stated Health Commissioner Balster. "We firmly believe that personal choices are going to play a huge part of how this illness plays out. We all have a personal responsibility to help prevent COVID-19. Stay home as much as you can especially if you are sick. That's our best weapon against COVID-19 right now."

Individuals can follow these steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

1. Cover every cough and sneeze with your arm.
2. Stay home and maintain a 6-foot distance from others as necessary.
3. Wash your hands often with soap and water.
4. Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
5. Avoid people who are sick.
6. Clean frequently touched surfaces.

PCPH does not diagnose, test, or treat COVID-19. If you are feeling sick or have questions about your personal health, please contact your health care provider or an urgent care provider. Emergency rooms should only be used for immediate life-threatening conditions.

As a reminder for the public, symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

If a person believes they may have symptoms or have come in contact with a positive COVID-19 case, they should CALL their doctor. People with mild illness are encouraged to stay home and care for themselves. It is strongly discouraged to show up to your healthcare provider office or hospitals without calling first, which can risk the health of others.

PCPH will continue to provide accurate local data on their website at preblecountyhealth.org/coronavirus and on social media (@preblecohealth).

If you have questions about COVID-19 you can contact Preble County Public Health at 937-472-0087 or at admin@preblecountyhealth.org. You may also call ODH COVID-19 Hotline for questions at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.

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