



## **Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 20, 2020

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, each of us will know someone who has been infected with the disease, whether they have mild symptoms and are self-isolating or they have been tested due to more severe symptoms and told by their medical provider to stay home. This may include someone in our own household.

“With the weekend upon us, people will be spending more time at home. Social distancing that has been occurring in the workplace should carry over to home life,” said Nita Ludwig, public health administrator at the Rock Island County Health Department.

The CDC has provided recommendations for people who find themselves as the caregivers or household members of someone who is self-isolating. These recommendations can help to minimize the risk of spreading the virus.

- Make sure you understand and can help the person with the directions of the health care provider related to medication and care.
- Limit visitors who do not have an important need to be in the home.
- Make sure you have good air flow in shared spaces of the home. This includes an open window or other similar options.
- Wash your hands often with soap and hot water or sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Washing laundry very well and wash anything with blood, body fluids, and or other secretions right away.
- Monitor the individual’s symptoms. Be prepared to contact their health care provider if their symptoms worsen.

Below are some of the questions we have been asked at our health departments.

### **Should you visit your vulnerable (elderly, high-risk) relatives?**

- If relative is located in a nursing home, retirement home, or long-term care facility, please stay away.
- If relative lives at home, visitors should still be limited unless absolutely necessary, and good housekeeping practices and social distancing should be followed.
- Remember, just because you feel fine, you could still be carrying the virus and exposing it to others.

### **What if you are a caregiver for someone who is sick?**

- Stay in another room and use a separate bathroom, if possible.

- If facemasks are available, have them wear a facemask when you are around them.
- Avoid sharing household items (dishes, glasses towels, bedding, etc).
- Wash your hands after interacting with them.
- Clean all high-touch surfaces every day, including counter tops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones and other things.
- Monitor their symptoms, and monitor your symptoms as well.

### **What are the best ways to clean?**

- Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect
- Clean all “high-touch” areas, such as counter tops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones and other things.
- Consider cleaning soft surfaces, including carpets and rugs
- Wash laundry very well- wash anything with blood or body fluids right away.
- Read the labels of all cleaning products and use them as the product recommends.

### **Food Safety**

We know that these uncertain times naturally cause each of us to figure out what is within our control. We also recognize that in preparing to stay home for longer periods of time, many of our residents have stocked up on food supplies in the last week.

We wanted to take a moment to remind you of food safety guidelines:

- “Best if Use-By” and other date labels are often confusing.
- Baby formula is the only product that is required to follow product dating.
- All other date labeling is established by the food manufacture as a recommendation for the highest quality.
- Shelf-stable food that does not require refrigeration or to be frozen is generally safe to eat after the recommended date
- Most meat, such as chicken, beef, pork, etc. should be frozen and follow thawing guidelines
- Even after opening, most milk and dairy products are good several days after the recommended date
- If you planned ahead and froze food that was purchased, remember to thaw it safely before use. Thaw foods in the refrigerator, microwave, under running water, or other options. Just remember to not let the internal temperature go above 41 degrees for longer than 4 hours.
- For foods that you may not have frozen, look for Signs of food spoilage. These include texture change, sour smell, and discoloration
- As always, remember to cook foods thoroughly. You can find safety preparation information on both the Scott and Rock Island County Health Departments.

On the topic of food, we are seeing the support our community is providing to the restaurants and food service venues in our community. We provide you the following reminders:

- Food and beverages may be sold, as long as they are taken from the premises right away
- Call or use an app to place your order ahead of time
- Pick your prepared food up when it's ready
- This keeps you from needing to linger in the establishment while your food is being prepared
- Help our establishments comply with the requirements set by the governors

“As we continue to focus on social distancing, please plan ahead. Call ahead to businesses and local governments to find out what work can be done over the phone and online,” said Ed Rivers, director of the Scott County Health Department. “Again, social distancing is the best tool we have to help minimize the spread of this virus in our community.”

### **Fraud**

We have also been made aware of some fraud activities related to COVID-19. In the interest of social distancing, know that public health, healthcare, and other community partners WILL NOT be going door to door to share information or request information at this time. If you receive such a visit, call your local law enforcement agencies.

Also, the CDC or public health agencies will not be calling you to reserve vaccines or other COVID-19 related items, so please let your local law enforcement agencies know.

### **Social distancing**

We will continue to encourage you to help us to drive home the recommendations about social distancing. While many of the public places where we find ourselves are not open, we still all need to do our part to minimize the spread of illness. Dr. Katz recently shared why social distancing works:

- If you stay more than 6 feet away from other individuals, they cannot cough in your face and transmit the virus. That is basic droplet transmission.
- If you stay home, or limit excursions outside the home, you have less opportunity for someone to cough in your face and less opportunity to pick up the virus on your hands from someone who coughed without good etiquette.
- If you stay home when you have a cough, you will then not be the individual who soils the elevator button or coughed near an older member of the community or someone with an underlying health condition.
- Larger gatherings give more opportunities to make a mistake and transmit than small gatherings. However, small gatherings still give more opportunities than no gatherings.

Please help us all: stay home when you're sick. Call ahead to your provider if you begin to notice a fever, cough, or shortness of breath. And wash your hands and cover your cough.

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