

Public Safety Alert!

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Osage County, Missouri
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Health Department

My name is Susan Long and I am the nurse/administrator for the Osage County Health Department. I apologize for this brief intrusion, but I want to present the most current facts and recommendations on the COVID-19 disease.

- 4 cases identified in MO so far. Testing is still limited, but I foresee that we will soon have the ability for mass testing which we would do via a drive through clinic. Information will be provided, once we have this capability
- No one in Osage County has been identified for testing. For testing in this county, the doctor's office would have to contact me for this.
- OCHD does have a plan and we have been working these last several weeks with our various community partners such as schools, churches, businesses, health care facilities and county and local municipalities to prepare for this.
- The state health department has established a hotline number which is operating 24/7 and is being staffed by health care professional to take calls for questions/concerns. They can also authorize for testing. The number is 1-877-435-8411. You are also welcome to call the Osage County Health Department at 573-897-3103. We are open from 8-4:30 on regular business days

I just want to remind people that:

- Hand washing is the most important thing ALL of us can do to combat this. It has been determined that the virus can be passed in the stool of an infected person. Wash your hands especially after you use the bathroom. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available. Avoid touching anywhere on your face. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, especially cell phones.
- Social distancing is our next best weapon against this disease. This means at least 3 ft, but preferable 6 ft apart from others especially when indoors
- Stay home if you are sick! Don't take sick children to school or daycare!
- Those over 60, those with chronic medical conditions such as heart disorders or chronic lung disease or anyone of any age who is immunocompromised are at higher risk of more severe illness.
- If you have concerns that you may have symptoms of the disease such as a fever over 100.4 and a cough and may have been exposed, please contact your doctor's office, hospital emergency room, the health department, the hotline number for directions. If you call 911, they will be asking you questions about this.
- Please make sure you and all of your loved ones are up-to-date on immunizations. We still have diseases such as the flu, Hepatitis A and measles around the county, state and country. These are diseases we can protect against with vaccines!
- Consider what outside events you REALLY need to attend for at least the next 2 months. Many events are being cancelled and I will be working with local groups to determine the advisability to hold large events here in Osage County
- Start planning for the worst such as your work/your child's school/daycare being closed. Make sure you have a 2 week supply of food, medication and health needs without hoarding commonly used items. Keep your gas tank at least half full. Should quarantine be necessary at any time, a business may be temporarily closed making it more inconvenient to get what you need.

The one thing I want to stress most is to use common sense. The CDC has excellent information which is almost constantly updated as they learn more facts about COVID-19. The MO DHSS website is also good, but it references the CDC site frequently. Please make sure you are accessing accurate and reliable information. There is misinformation aplenty out on the internet and on social media. I will try to keep our Facebook page and our webpage as up-to-date as we can, but we are a small health department and obviously we are busier with this event in place. Again, don't hesitate to call the Osage County Health Department or the hotline number. To everyone's good health!