March 18, 2020

DOH-Walton Announces First Positive Case of COVID-19

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DeFuniak Springs, Fla. The Florida Department of Health in Walton County announces the first positive case of COVID-19 in Walton County. Holy Holt, Health Officer said "We are doing our due diligence to validate testing results before it is shared with the community. Once the information is validated, we begin contact tracing immediately." "In an effort to keep Walton County residents, as well as all Florida residents and visitors safe and aware about the status of the virus, we are working with community stakeholders to issue updates two times per day" said Ms. Holt. The Joint Information Center on COVID-19 for the State of Florida is also issuing regular updates two times per day. Updated information can also be found at http://walton.floridahealth.gov/, www.floridahealth.gov and www.cdc.gov or you can call the COVID-19 Call Center (866) 779-6121 24/7 or email COVID-19@flhealth.gov.

Testing

- If a person thinks they have COVID-19, they should call their health care provider before going to their office so the provider can take precautions to prevent exposing other people. Review your signs, symptoms and travel history with your physician. Your physician will evaluate you for other possible causes of respiratory illness. If you are without health insurance or a health care provider, please contact the Walton County Health Department at (850) 401-6453 so we can coordinate your medical evaluation and testing. Once you have been tested for COVID-19, self-isolate for 14 days or until you receive the results from your test and further guidance from your health care provider.

- Most people with confirmed COVID-19 infection reportedly have mild to moderate respiratory illness and can be managed at home in coordination with your provider and your local health department. Persons with severe illness may be hospitalized. Contact tracing is done for many diseases including tuberculosis, vaccine preventable diseases like measles and pertussis, sexually transmitted diseases and now COVID-19. Contacts of a case of COVID-19 are placed in self-isolation for 14 days from their last date of exposure. These individuals monitor themselves for symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath. Public Health personnel stay in touch with the contact throughout the entire isolation process. DOH-Walton provides the individual with a phone number to call if they think they are getting sick. If a contact gets sick with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, that person will be tested. If that person comes back positive for COVID-19, then contact tracing begins again. If the contact of a COVID-19 case completes the 14-day isolation period without illness, they are cleared to return to their daily activities.

What you can do to protect you and your family at Home

- Continue to practice good hand washing. Cover coughs and sneezes. Stay home from work if you are sick and keep children home from school when sick.
- Remind family members not to touch their faces.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces like doorknobs, tables and handrails.
- Open windows or adjust air conditioning to increase ventilation.
- Treat vulnerable family members, such as those over the age of 65 or with chronic medical conditions, as though others are a threat to them. Practice good hygiene when caring for them. If they are sick, provide them with their own room, and keep the door closed.

What you can do at work

- Good hand hygiene is as important at work as it is at home. Encourage employees to clean hands at the door and send email reminders to clean hands throughout the day.
- Stop shaking hands. Use other, non-contact methods of greeting customers and coworkers.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Open windows or adjust air conditioning to increase ventilation.
- Consider videoconferencing for meetings whenever possible. When not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces.
- Assess the risks of business travel.
- Handle food carefully and limit food sharing.
- Ensure cafeteria staff and their close contacts practice strict hygiene.
- Allow employees to stay home if they are sick or have a sick family member.

Businesses

Encourage employees and customers to:

- Stop shaking hands. Use non-contact methods of greeting.
- Clean hands at the door and send employees email reminders to clean hands throughout the day.
- Promote tap and pay to limit handling of cash.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Open windows or adjust air conditioning to increase ventilation.
- Avoid crowding by booking appointments to stagger customer flow.

Public Transportation Businesses

- Open windows whenever possible.
- Increase ventilation.
- Disinfect surfaces regularly.

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To find the most up-to-date information and guidance on COVID-19, please visit the Department of Health's dedicated COVID-19 webpage at https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/.

For information and advisories from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), please visit the CDC COVID-19 website at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

 For more information about current travel advisories issued by the U.S. Department of State, please visit the travel advisory website at https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information.html/.

For other questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, please contact the Department's dedicated COVID-19 Call Center at 866-779-6121. The line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, 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 Facebook, Instagram and Twitter at @HealthyFla. For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.