



HEALTH ADVISORY: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

August 24, 2020

The CDC continues to stress that the most effective way to prevent the spread of any disease is through proper hygiene. The CDC has established the following steps to reduce exposure to COVID-19:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when in public and when around people who do not live in your household.
- Wash your hands with soap and water on a regular basis.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and stay home when you are sick.
- Distance yourself at least six feet from people who do not live in your household.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and then dispose of the tissue in the trash.

The following is provided by Dr. Scott Milton, Health Authority for Potter and Randall counties:

- Providers performing tests should tell a person who is tested to stay home until the test results are received.
- Amarillo Public Health performs contact investigation and tracing for positives that are reported.
- Providers performing tests should tell a person who tests positive to isolate for ten days from the date of test collection.
- Positive cases as well as individuals who are symptomatic but not tested should:
 - isolate themselves to a room in the home away from other house members. A room with an attached bathroom works best.
 - wear a mask when around other people
 - follow the hygiene guidance above
 - seek medical care outside the home as necessary but should call ahead
 - avoid public transportation
 - not share dishes, towels, or bedding with others
 - clean and disinfect all “high touch” surfaces in the “sick room” and bathroom daily and ask another house member to clean and disinfect “high touch” surfaces in the remainder of the home
- Household members of a positive case are quarantined for fourteen days from their break in contact with the positive case. If there is no break in contact, the fourteen days will start at the end of the positive case’s ten-day isolation.



- Providers should ask about potential exposure before performing tests to help determine if the individual will be quarantined even if the test is negative. (i.e. A patient will need to quarantine, even with a negative test result, if a close contact is positive)
- A negative test result during quarantine does not decrease the length of time the patient is required to be quarantined, due to the incubation period.
- Amarillo Public Health will issue return to work notes, upon request, for cases that test positive.
- In the event of an exposure, quarantine can be avoided if both parties are properly masked the entire time during the exposure.
- CDC's guidance for the test-based strategy using PCR testing was updated on August 16th.
 - For persons who are severely immunocompromised, a test-based strategy could be considered in consultation with infectious diseases experts.
 - For all others, **a test-based strategy is no longer recommended** except to discontinue isolation or precautions earlier than would occur under the strategy outlined in Part 1, above. (20-day quarantine for those with severe illness requiring hospitalization)

Questions or requests for additional information can be directed to Amarillo Public Health at 806-378-6300. For afterhours emergencies call 806-680-8980.