



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Julie McClure

Director of Communication

P: (402) 910-6579

Email: jmclure@ecdhd.ne.gov

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East Central District Health Department offers clarification of new, State Directed Health Measures, and offers definitions of quarantine and isolation for COVID-19 cases.

[Columbus]--On Monday, September 21, the four counties of the East Central District Health Department (ECDHD) moved to Phase IV of the State's Directed Health Measures (DHMs). These DHMs are scheduled to remain in place until October 31, 2020 unless they are renewed, extended, or terminated.

While Phase IV is less restrictive, COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are increasing across the ECDHD counties (Boone, Colfax, Nance and Platte), as well as the rest of Nebraska. The risk levels for ECDHD counties increased this week and current trends indicate continued risk increases through September. The majority of new cases in the ECDHD are between persons who are sick and people they know, in many cases, family members or roommates/friends who live in the same house as the sick person.

To prevent or limit the spread of COVID-19, the new DHMs require that persons **quarantine** if they have had a close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Close contact occurs when an individual has been within 6 feet, for at least 15 minutes, of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, or has a fever of 100.4° or above and/or the sudden onset of one or more of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, or loss of taste/smell.

For 14 days, persons who are quarantining should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19, including:

- Fever of 100.4° or higher.
- Cough.
- Shortness of breath.
- Sudden loss of taste or smell.

Quarantine may be stopped under the following conditions:

- At least 14 days have passed since the quarantined individuals last close contact exposure AND
- There has been no symptom development.

Isolation is required when a person has tested positive for COVID-19 OR has developed a fever of 100.4° or higher, and/or the sudden onset of one or more of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, or loss of taste or smell. Isolation shall continue until:

- At least 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms AND
- Symptoms have improved AND
- The isolated individual has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

These timelines may need to be extended for patients with severe illness or who are severely immunocompromise. Consult your healthcare provider for guidance.

Persons who tested positive for COVID-19 and **do not have symptoms** may discontinue isolation under these conditions:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of the first positive test AND
- They have had no symptom development.

For three days following discontinuation of isolation, persons must continue to limit contact (stay 6 feet away from others) and when possible, wear a face mask or covering.

Whether individuals are quarantining or self-isolating, they should take the following precautions to prevent or limit the spread of COVID-19:

- Stay home except to get medical care. People who are mildly ill with COVID-19 are able to recover at home. Stay in touch with your doctor, and get care if you feel worse, or think it is an emergency situation. Emergency warning signs for COVID-19 require immediate medical attention, and include:
 - Trouble breathing.
 - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest.
 - New confusion or inability to awaken.
 - Bluish lips or face.
- Separate yourself from other people in your home.
 - Stay in a specific “sick room” as much as possible, away from other people you live with. Use a separate bathroom if possible.
 - Wear a facemask if you are around others.
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes.
 - Wash your hands often.
 - Avoid sharing personal household items such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels/bedding.
 - After using personal household items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water or put in the dishwasher.
 - Clean all “high touch” surfaces every day. High touch surfaces include: Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.

For all residents of its four counties, ECDHD continues to recommend that all persons:

- Frequently wash their hands, using soap and water, for a minimum of 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Frequently clean shared spaces.
- Maintain a distance of at least six feet from anyone outside their household.
- Wear a mask in any public situation in which you are not able to maintain a distance of six feet from others.

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