



Press Release

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department

Web: health.hamiltontn.org

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

March 15, 2020

Health Department Asks for Cooperation from Citizens in Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department asks that all residents cooperate fully with public health investigations and restricted movement orders that are being issued. Because there is yet no vaccine or medications for this virus, these restricted movement orders, along with social distancing and everyday actions to protect yourself, are the only things that can protect our community. Even though we received an additional 2 negative COVID-19 tests today, we know that the virus is present in our community, and actions are required by all to keep it from spreading in our county.

“We want to make it clear that the residents of Hamilton County are our partners,” says Health Department Administrator Becky Barnes, “We’re asking everyone to view these public health measures as concrete actions people can take to stop this pandemic.”

If you have potentially been exposed to a positive COVID-19 case, the Health Department will attempt to contact you by phone or email. It is vital that you respond to their voice mails or messages as soon as possible. Public notices will be used in cases where all the contacts cannot be located. Health Department staff will assess your situation to determine whether quarantine or isolation are warranted. Quarantine means to separate a person who is believed to have been exposed but does not yet show symptoms, while isolation means to separate a person who is known or reasonably believed to be infected. Whether quarantined or isolated, the Health Department will issue restricted orders and maintain contact with you on a daily basis and help coordinate care for you if needed.

Social distancing means remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance (6 feet) from others when possible. Individuals and families should plan stay home and plan activities in places where people do not cluster, such as going for a hike or starting a spring garden in their yards. Organizations should consider postponing or cancelling events and employers may need to implement work-from-home strategies. Restaurants and theaters should consider spacing patrons out, such as seating every other table or every 3rd seat.

Those who are 60 years or older and those with compromised immune systems are at highest risk for COVID-19 and should take extra precaution to reduce their contact with people.

It is critical that everyone practice these everyday actions to protect themselves and others:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are unavailable, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home if you are sick to protect others.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve, elbow, or tissue. Discard the tissue immediately after use.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects.
- Community members 60+ years of age should limit exposure to large groups and ensure they have an adequate supply at home of medications and food.
- Stay informed using reliable information sources, such as the [CDC](#) and the [Tennessee Department of Health](#).

For more information about COVID-19, please call our hotline call center at 423-209-8383. The hours for the coming week are Monday-Friday 8AM-6PM, however, hours may expand to meet the need so refer to the Health Department's [website](#) for future hours and update weekend hours toward the end of the week.