

Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department



Web: health.hamiltontn.org

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

November 13, 2020

Health Department Guidance to Reduce the Transmission of COVID-19 inside a Household

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN - Hamilton County Health Department investigations reveal that many of the new cases of COVID infection are occurring within households.

Typically, a household member becomes infected outside of the home, such as in a workplace or social gathering, and then brings the virus home and infects others living there. These household infections occur quickly, and both adults and children can spread the virus.

“Some people with COVID-19 show no or mild symptoms and think they can go on about their normal routines, but this is contributing to the spike in cases,” said Health Department Administrator Becky Barnes, “Anyone testing positive, whether they have symptoms or not, needs to isolate both from the community and within the home.”

Knowledge of how the virus is transmitted is key to reducing its spread within the household:

- According to the CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html> the main source of COVID-19 transmission is close contact, which is touching or being within 6 feet of an infected person. The more time you are in close contact, the greater your risk of infection.
- Coughing, sneezing, breathing, talking or shouting, singing, and exercising produce respiratory droplets. Inhaling these droplets or handling objects or surfaces where droplets have settled can be sources of infection.

Some practical tips to prevent spread within the home:

- According to the CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>, devote a room to the infected person, if possible. All their needs should be delivered to their room with as little contact as possible.
- If it is not possible to devote a bathroom to the sick person, then clean and disinfect surfaces between uses and according to [CDC recommendations](#).
- Wearing a mask within the home, especially the infected person, can reduce the risk of transmission. A mask is not a substitute for social distancing.
- Do not share personal items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
- Prevent pets and children from going between the isolation room and the rest of the house.
- When a sick person lives alone, family or friends should run errands and deliver items to their porch, or wear a mask when entering the home to unload the items. Wash or sanitize hands upon leaving.
- Ensure adequate ventilation within the home. CDC information shows that enclosed spaces and poor ventilation can increase the airborne transmission of respiratory droplets.
- Monitor the symptoms of an infected person. Seek emergency medical care immediately if [emergency warning signs](#) develop (including trouble breathing).

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According to the CDC, an estimated [40-45% of COVID infections](#) do not exhibit symptoms (asymptomatic), yet these patients are infectious and can transmit the virus to others. Additionally, people can be infectious to others up to 48 hours before they themselves show any symptoms (pre-symptomatic).

Therefore, it is likely that household transmission is occurring before anyone in the house realizes they are infected, which is why it remains vitally important to take these protective measures to prevent bringing the virus home:

- Strengthen your practice of social distancing, especially at this time of increased cases.
- Wear a mask when you are within 6 feet of anyone outside your household unit.
- Avoid gatherings and do not plan holiday activities with people outside your household.
- Wash hands frequently or use hand sanitizer when unable to wash.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces at work and school regularly.
- Avoid close contact.

Free COVID-19 Testing:

- Free Health Department drive-through COVID-19 testing at the Alstom site is open daily from 8:30AM-1:00PM, but will close at 11:30AM Thursday November 19th to accommodate a 12PM flu vaccine clinic.
- The site will be closed Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after.
- Daily testing will resume the following Saturday, November 28.
- Call the Health Department's hotline at 423-209-8383 to request free transportation to Alstom, or for information about other community testing sites.
- *Everyone in the car should be wearing a mask.*

Free Flu Vaccine:

- A free flu vaccine drive-through clinic will be held at New Hope Baptist Church, 3777 Wilcox Blvd, Chattanooga, TN 37411, this Saturday, November 14, from 10AM-2 PM, for Hamilton County residents 18 years and older. *Everyone in the car should be wearing a mask.*
- Pediatric flu vaccines are by appointment only at the Health Department's 3rd Street (423-209-8050) and Sequoyah clinics (423-209-5490). *All parents/guardians should be wearing a mask when accompanying children.*
- Additional flu vaccine clinics are scheduled throughout 2020. Call the Health Department's hotline at 423-209-8383 for details.

Additional information may be accessed through these Health Department resources:

- Health Department hotline: (423) 209-8383
- Website: <http://health.hamiltontn.org/>
- English Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonTNHealthDept/>
- Spanish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SaludHamiltonTN/>
- YouTube English: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCckF8VUBQFLiJoxh8Sk10mA>
- YouTube Spanish: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwHuLpBFuLOf6hDTCFbfyQ>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/HamiltonHealth>
- Subscribe to the Mailing List: <https://landing.mailerlite.com/webforms/landing/j6u3e5>

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