



# Linn County Department of Health Services

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[www.linncountyhealth.org](http://www.linncountyhealth.org)

*“Working together to promote the health and well-being of all Linn County residents”*

**Recently there has been a significant rise in COVID-19 cases in Linn County.** This is very concerning as COVID-19 is caused by a highly contagious coronavirus and illness can be very severe particularly for those with underlying medical problems and those who are older (age greater than sixty-five).

**There is no denying the fatigue and frank hardship that many are enduring as the pandemic continues. Some have suggested that COVID-19 is no worse than the flu (influenza), but that is clearly a mistaken notion as COVID-19 is much more lethal than the flu. Because of the seriousness of this illness, the following measures remain crucial, as the virus clearly has not gone away as our rise in cases demonstrates:**

- 1. Wearing masks: This is probably the single most important measure** that we can all take to prevent the spread of the virus. Masks should cover the mouth and nose and should always be worn when indoors around other persons and should also be worn outdoors when it is not possible to maintain at least six feet of separation from others.
- 2. Social Distancing:** Stay at least six feet away from those whom you do not regularly live with. Do not attend large gatherings and parties. This includes family gatherings where family members do not live in the same household.
- 3. Wash your hands** frequently and clean common surfaces with disinfectant.
- 4. Stay home if you are sick.**

Terminology can be confusing in respect to COVID-19 infection and, in particular, these terms merit explanation:

- 1. Isolation** – Persons diagnosed with COVID-19 need to isolate themselves for the period that they are likely infectious to others. This is generally ten days from the onset of symptoms. Someone need to be fever free without using fever reducing medications and symptoms improving. COVID-19 infected persons should stay home and attempt to isolate themselves from other residing in their home.
- 2. Quarantine** – Person who are exposed to know active COVID-19 cases should quarantine themselves for a period of fourteen days from the time of their last exposure to the infected person avoiding exposure of others residing in the same home. Persons who have had significant exposure to persons with known active COVID-19 infection should seek testing from their health care provider to see if they are infected. A negative test, however, **does not** eliminate the need for the 14-day quarantine.

Quarantine and isolation can be very difficult for many reasons, not the least of which relates to employment circumstances. It is **essential that employers allow their employees to quarantine and/or isolate for the recommended periods without jeopardizing the employee's employment status.**

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Other measures important in trying to prevent the spread of COVID-19 include:

1. **Answer the phone!** Contact tracing is crucial to attempts at limiting the spread of COVID-19 and is performed by trained Linn County Health Department personnel who work seven day a week. If performed in a strictly confidential fashion. If you are infected as determined by testing or have been identified as exposed to a case of COVID-19, you will be contacted by phone. By identifying persons potentially exposed to the virus, further spread of this infection can be limited by quarantine.  
This is an extraordinarily important method of containing this disease and **your cooperation is essential and much appreciated.**
2. **Avoid carpooling to work or school if possible.** If carpooling is unavoidable, be sure to wear masks and attempt to carpool with the same people consistently.
3. **Do not attend large gatherings and parties** including family gatherings with family members who do not live in your immediate home.

The Linn County Health Department requests your continued cooperation and diligence in observing these precautions and measures to avoid the worsening of this epidemic in our region. The virus is a cruel adversary that makes no distinction as to its victims in terms of politics, religion or other ways in which we might regard ourselves. **We must all do our best for the common good.**

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