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## DOH-SANTA ROSA ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO CONTINUE TO PRACTICE PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF RESPIRATORY VIRUSES



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**Milton, Fla.** - The Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County continues to encourage residents to take precautions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19.

"Our message hasn't changed," said Sandra L. Park-O'Hara, APRN, DOH-Santa Rosa Administrator. "The best way to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, is through good hygiene, and that means frequently washing your hands, covering your coughs and sneezes, and, most importantly, staying at home if you are sick and keeping children at home if they are sick."

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 and it is spread from person to person through respiratory droplets when people cough or sneeze. To help prevent the spread of it and other respiratory viruses, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) recommend these precautions:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Cover your coughs or sneezes with a disposable tissue, then throw the tissue away, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow.
- Most importantly, stay home if you are sick, and keep children home if they are sick, until fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces using a regular household cleaner or wipes.

The CDC does not recommend the use of a mask by individuals who are well. Masks should only be used if you have symptoms to help prevent the spread of the virus to others.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. However, these symptoms are also common with other respiratory illnesses, so if you are having any of these symptoms, contact your health care provider.

It is also important to remember that most cases of COVID-19 are mild and people recover well at home, but the illness can be serious in those over the age of 65 and who suffer from chronic conditions that can compromise the immune system, leading to hospitalization and, in some cases, death.

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) works continuously with its community partners to ensure that everyone is prepared in the eventuality of infectious disease spread. Please visit the Department's dedicated COVID-19 webpage at [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov). The webpage remains the best and most up-to-date resource for information and guidance regarding COVID-19 in Florida.

For any other questions related to COVID-19 in Florida, please contact the Department's dedicated COVID-19 Call Center by calling 1-866-779-6121 or emailing [COVID-19@flhealth.gov](mailto:COVID-19@flhealth.gov). **The Call Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

DOH-Santa Rosa has also established a line for residents to call with questions relating to COVID-19 at **850-564-2307**.

Information on COVID-19 from the CDC can be accessed at [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov).

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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