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## BASIC STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES, INCLUDING COVID-19

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**Milton, FL** - Following Governor DeSantis' announcement Thursday that a Santa Rosa County individual had been presumptively diagnosed with COVID-19 (corona virus), the Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County (DOH-Santa Rosa) would like to encourage the public to take these basic steps to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19:

- Wash your hands often 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 readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) does not recommend that people who are well use a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.

The symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. However, these symptoms may also indicate other diseases of the respiratory system. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, contact your health care provider.

It is important to remember that most cases of COVID-19 are mild and patients will recover; however, the illness can be serious in individuals who suffer from chronic medical conditions that may compromise their immune systems and may lead to hospitalization or death. That's why it is important to contact your health care provider if you have symptoms and have been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 or if you have traveled to a country that has been impacted by the virus.

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) works continuously with all our community partners to ensure that everyone is prepared in the eventuality of infectious disease spread. Additional

efforts can be found at [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov) and additional information can be found at [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov).

DOH has also established a COVID-19 Call Center to answer telephone calls from residents Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to Midnight, at 1-866-779-6121.

For the most up-to-date information on the COVID-19 outbreak, visit  
<http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/COVID-19/index.html>

### **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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