KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

Kirksville, MO 5/20/22 – If you look around in most places in Adair County these days, you might think COVID-19 is a thing of the past. It isn't. In fact, the Omicron subvariants are the most highly transmissible to date. Although Omicron resulted in fewer hospitalizations than the previous variants, hospitalizations are once again on the rise.

"Most people have stopped wearing masks and taking any type of precautions against COVID-19 now," said Jim LeBaron, Adair County Health Department administrator. "Although our confirmed cases of the virus are much lower than before, residents are still testing positive for COVID-19. Taking precautions if you are elderly or have a health condition that makes you more susceptible to severe symptoms is still what you should be doing," LeBaron said. "For sure, if you have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or if you have symptoms or have tested positive, you need to make sure you don't pass it on."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourage people to get tested if they have symptoms, and to test before traveling or being in a place with a lot of other people, including workplaces, schools, and church. The federal government has just opened requests for a third round of at-home rapid test kits shipped to homes for free. Every household will receive eight tests upon request online at https://www.covid.gov/tests or by calling toll-free 1-800-232-0233.

Isolation Guidelines for Those Who Test Positive

If you test positive for COVID-19 or experience symptoms, that day is Day 0, according to the CDC guidelines. You should isolate at home for at least five days and wear a mask around any others in your home during that time. You can end isolation after Day 5 if you had no symptoms or if you have been fever-free for 24 hours without using any medication to reduce your fever. You should continue masking through Day 10 because you may still be infectious.

If you are very ill or have a weakened immune system, you should isolate for at least 10 days and call your healthcare provider. There are certain therapeutic treatments that are used to treat severe cases of COVID-19, or for those with certain underlying health issues and older adults. Antiviral pills, monoclonal antibodies, and remdesivir may be prescribed by your doctor.

Quarantine Guidelines for Those Exposed to Someone with COVID-19

If you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and you are not fully vaccinated and boosted, the CDC recommends that you quarantine for five days at home, wearing a mask at all times around others in your home. Five days after exposure, you should get tested, even if you don't have symptoms. You should watch for symptoms for up to 10 days after exposure, avoid travel, and mask around others for up to day 10.

If you have been exposed and are fully vaccinated and boosted, or if you tested positive for COVID-19 during the 90 days prior to exposure, you do not need to quarantine, but you should follow all the other recommendations for unvaccinated partially vaccinated people.

"We still encourage all Adair County residents to get fully vaccinated and boosted. The vaccines continue to help reduce the risk of severe and life-threatening disease," LeBaron said. Moreover, we encourage residents to use at-home tests as a precaution and to get a PCR test done if they experience symptoms. Then, follow the quarantine and isolation guidelines," LeBaron said. "COVID-19 is still here, and there's still a need to stop the spread."

Those who get their first and second vaccines at the Adair County Health Department may receive a $50 gift card from one of four local retailers, Casey's, Hy-Vee, Walgreens, and Walmart, depending on supplies, following first or second shots. The incentive program does not include those receiving third doses or boosters.

"Getting a $50 gift card is a great added bonus to the protection the vaccines provide," LeBaron said.

Residents with questions regarding testing, vaccinations, quarantine, and isolation should call their healthcare provider or the Adair County Health Department at 660-665-8491.

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