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"Working towards a healthy and safe Putnam County"

March 19, 2020

The health and safety of our community is our top priority. With the identification of COVID-19 (coronavirus) cases in Ohio, including some from community spread (person did not travel and has no known contact with a person who is ill), it is important to understand some important information about this situation. In addition, with an increase in testing, which is now available in Ohio, we anticipate that there will be a rise in the number of confirmed cases in the state and in the U.S.

How does the virus spread?

The coronavirus is spread by close contact between people, mostly from respiratory droplets which are produced when a person coughs or sneezes. There are some indications that the virus may also be on objects such as doorknobs, grocery carts, etc., but it is uncertain at this time how long the virus lives on these objects.

What are the symptoms?

Fever, cough and shortness of breath are the symptoms most commonly seen.

What can you do?

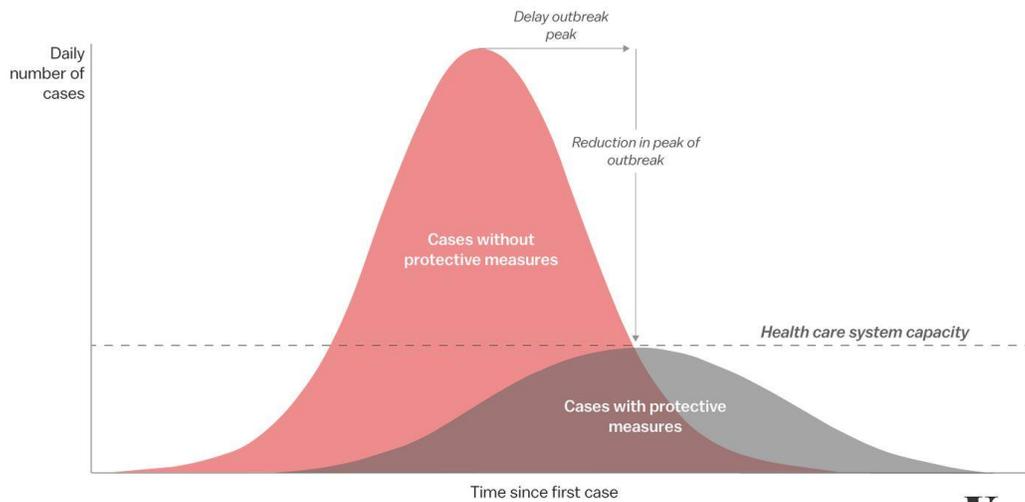
The best way to prevent illness, including COVID-19, is:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; dry hands with a clean towel or air dry hands
- Use alcohol-based (60%) hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable
- Cover your mouth with a tissue or sleeve when sneezing or coughing. Discard tissues immediately
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Stay home when you are sick
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Call your doctor or healthcare provider BEFORE you go to determine if you should be seen if sick

Why are there closings and cancellations (schools, restaurants, bars, salons, etc)?

Recently, several decisions were made by state leaders in an effort to slow the spread of Coronavirus in Ohio. While some of these decisions are unpopular and difficult to understand, there are science-based reasons that these decisions were made. Now that the disease is in our state, **social distancing** is one tool we have that can help slow the spread of illness. The graph below shows how taking these steps can dramatically decrease the number of cases caused by the virus. During this difficult time, remember that we all share the same goal of decreased illness and death from this novel virus.

Flattening the curve



Vox

The goal of social distancing is not to completely stop the virus from spreading...it is to SLOW the spread so that there is less stress on the healthcare system at one time. Remember, the healthcare system is still needed to treat those that have other life-threatening issues, or who are having a baby! If they are overwhelmed with COVID-19 cases, the stress on the system may be too great to handle.

Keep in mind that this is a rapidly evolving situation. The health department will continue to work with our state and local agencies and partners in an effort to minimize the effect on Putnam County as much as possible.

Experts are declaring this a pandemic and a national emergency! **Please do your part by sharing accurate information with community and refrain from spreading rumors. We must all work together to get through this crisis!**

More information can be found at:

Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov

Ohio Department of Health: www.coronavirus.ohio.gov

1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634)

Putnam County Health Department: www.putnamhealth.com

Sincerely,

Kim Rieman, RN, MPH, CHES

Putnam County Health Commissioner