IREDELL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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HEALTH DIRECTOR

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Iredell County Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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Changes in COVID-19 Testing Recommendations

On March 23, 2020, the North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services released new recommendations for North Carolina clinicians and laboratories related to testing for COVID-19. This guidance was shared with Iredell County medical providers by the Iredell County Health Department on March 23, 2020. It is now recommended that people with mild symptoms consistent with COVID-19 do NOT need testing and should be instructed to stay at home to recover. Mild symptoms are defined as having fever and cough.

With mild symptoms, the treatment is focused on symptom management. Having a positive test does not change this management. Even coming out to be tested may spread illness to others in the community, including those at higher risk of complications and health care workers. People not infected could become so when seeking testing. Anyone who develops mild symptoms should self-isolate at home until at least 7 days since symptom onset **and** 72 hours after symptom resolution (absent of fever without the use of fever-reducing medication with improvement in respiratory symptoms).

If someone with mild symptoms who is self-isolating at home starts having shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chest discomfort, altered thinking or bluish or grayish colored skin, nails or lips, they should receive medical treatment immediately. The health department advises anyone self-isolating at home to tell your medical provider (call before going), 911 and all first responders that you are worried that you might have the virus that causes COVID-19. This gives them the opportunity to use the appropriate personal protective equipment before providing you care.

"We must do all we can to protect our health care workers and first responders. We are only at the beginning of community transmission. These critical services are necessary to protect the health and safety of others" advised Jane Hinson, Iredell County Health Director.

The Iredell County Health Department is urging residents to continue practicing social distancing in an effort to limit exposure to others and to protect yourself as best as possible. Social distancing means the avoidance of crowded places and maintaining distances of at least six feet from other people. In addition, it's important for households to remember the importance of practicing everyday preventative actions that can help prevent the spread of respiratory illness:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.

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www.co.iredell.nc.us/161/Health-Department

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily (e.g., tables, countertops, cell phones, computers, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles) using a regular household detergent and water
- 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 a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Always wash your hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.

Residents with general questions about COVID-19 can call the NC Division of Public Health Coronavirus Call Line 24 hours a day/7 days a week: **2-1-1**. Nurses and pharmacists from the North Carolina Poison Control are available to answer questions.

Additional information related to COVID-19 can be found at the following resources:

NC DHHS-DPH: epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/diseases/2019nCoV.html

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

Iredell County Health Department: https://nc-iredellcounty.civicplus.com/1383/Coronavirus-COVID-19

North Carolina Public Information Hotline: 2-1-1 or 888-892-1162 or text COVIDNC to 898211

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