WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

The Monmouth County Regional Health Commission is asking for your assistance to prepare for and help prevent the spread of the COVID-19. Nationally, there continues to be a growing number of people infected with this virus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization, COVID-19 is a pandemic. We need to prepare to prevent the spread of this virus locally.

SYMPTOMS

Fever, mild to severe lower respiratory illness. Symptoms can include cough, shortness of breath, and chest pain.

WHY IS COVID-19 A BIG DEAL?

There is still information we don't know about Sars-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Why is it so contagious? How should it be treated? Can be contained? These are some of the questions we need answers for. What we do know is that there is currently no vaccine and the incubation period is up to 14 days, which is longer than the seasonal flu. The biggest concern is that as the cases increase, hospitals will not have the capacity to treat the severely ill if too many people fall sick at the same time.

I TESTED POSTIVE FOR COVID-19, WHAT DO I DO?

If you test positive for COVID-19 it is most likely that you will have a mild case and can manage your symptoms at home. Monitor and record your symptoms every day. If possible, take your temperature twice a day. Drink lots of fluids (avoid caffeine and alcohol), increase your intake of Vitamin C and Zinc, and take fever reducing medications when needed.

Most importantly, isolate yourself at home away from family or other household members. If you must use shared areas like the bathroom, wear a mask, and wipe down any areas you touched. Have other household members wipe down those areas as well. Prepare your home so that you have an identified isolation room for anyone who is sick. If possible, activities such as sleep, eating and reading should be in that room.

WHEN CAN I STOP SELF-ISOLATION?

After your diagnosis, you will be asked to isolate yourself at home until:
1. You are fever free for at least 72 hours (three days) without the use of fever-reducing medications AND
2. At least seven days have passed since you first developed symptoms AND
3. Your symptoms have significantly improved.

If you have trouble figuring out when to stop isolation, contact your medical provider.

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EMERGENCY WARNING SIGNS AND WHEN SHOULD I GO TO HOSPITAL?

It's always best to self-monitor your health. If you notice symptoms including a fever, cough and shortness of breath, call your doctor. Your doctor will be able to determine if you need to seek further treatment in person. Call 9-1-1 if you develop any of the following emergency warning signs:

- Difficulty breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

If you are under home isolation and experience a medical emergency, call for an ambulance or dial 9-1-1. Inform the dispatch that you have tested positive for COVID-19 and are currently isolating at home. Calling will help them prepare and keep other people from getting infected.

WHAT CAN HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS DO?

Households members taking care or sharing a home with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 should take precautions to prevent spread of COVID-19 in the household. Those in the household who are healthy and not showing symptoms should:

- Avoid close contact with the person who tested positive.
- Wash their hands frequently prior to and after interacting with the high-risk person, refrain from sharing foods, towels and other items.
- Clean surface areas daily and after being touched by a person with COVID-19. Use gloves to clean with products that are proven to kill the virus or a mixture of bleach and water.
- Wash laundry thoroughly, if possible wear disposable gloves when handling soiled laundry and keep laundry away from their body. Then, wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water.

You should also identify a protected space for vulnerable household members; this can help limit the spread of COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control has more detailed information on "Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Homes and Residential Communities"

WHERE DO I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Call the NJ COVID-19 Hotline at 1800-222-1222 or 1-800-962-1253 if using out-of-state phone line. Visit https://covid19.nj.gov/ for New Jersey COVID-19 information.