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Preparing for Influenza and Other Respiratory Illnesses, such as COVID-19

There has recently been an increase in media attention on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in both humans and animals. There are four strains that are commonly found in Wisconsin and elsewhere around the world. These types usually cause mild to moderate upper respiratory illness, like the common cold. Most people get infected with one or more of these types at some point in their lives.

Marinette County Public Health doesn't want people to get confused with these common types of coronavirus and the COVID-19 coronavirus disease. If you are infected with one of the common coronavirus types (229E, NL63, OC43, and HKU1), that does **NOT** mean you are infected with the COVID-19 Coronavirus disease. There is a different test to determine if you are infected with the COVID-19 Coronavirus.

It is believed that the main way COVID-19 spreads to others is when someone with the virus coughs or sneezes and spreads the virus in droplets from the throat and nose to others. This is the same way influenza and other respiratory illnesses spread. Because of that, Marinette County Public Health wants to take this opportunity to remind the public of important steps they can take to protect themselves and their families.

At this time the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), and local Public Health are recommending the following precautions to remain healthy:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your sleeve or a disposable tissue, and wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating, after going to the bathroom, and after sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- People who are sick should stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without medicine.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

- Wipe down frequently touched surfaces (i.e., doorknobs, tabletops, phones, keyboards) with a disinfectant regularly, both at home and in the workplace.

Marinette County Public Health wants you to know that we are working with state and national experts to continuously monitor the COVID-19 situation. As the situation evolves, we will keep the public informed of any changes to these recommendations. Included below are links to trustworthy sources for information about COVID-19.

COVID-19 Resources <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/outbreaks/index.htm>
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

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