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Plain Communities Can Protect Themselves Against COVID-19

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The Novel Coronavirus Disease, known as COVID-19, is a highly infectious respiratory disease caused by a new type of the common coronavirus. The disease was discovered in China in December 2019 and has since spread around the world. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a worldwide pandemic, meaning that it is a disease that is taking place over a very large geographic area and affecting an extremely large number of people. Although the disease started in China, it is not associated with any specific country and in America, it is not a result of any political action.

People who are infected with COVID-19 may experience a runny nose, a sore throat, a dry cough, fever, and in severe cases, difficulty breathing. They may start having these symptoms between 2 and 14 days after being exposed to someone or something that has the virus. The disease can be very mild or severe.

COVID-19 can spread easily from person-to-person through respiratory droplets from an infected person who coughs or sneezes. It also can be spread by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your face. While everyone can get COVID-19, those who have a greater chance of getting it are older people and people of all ages who have ongoing medical conditions.

The response to COVID-19 is something that most people have never encountered. As we brave this new world together, but at a distance, here are some tips to take care of you and your family.

Protect yourself by thoroughly washing your hands often and stay six feet from another person. Do not be in groups of 10 or more people and do not shake hands. If you are sick, stay home except to get medical treatment, and stay away from other people in your home. Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze or cough and sneeze into your elbow. Do not share personal household items and clean all surfaces in your house.

Products that have been approved by the government to clean areas potentially containing the coronavirus include ammonia, hydrogen peroxide, and peroxyacetic acid.

Holmes Morton, MD, founder of the Clinic for Special Children in Strasburg in Strasburg, PA and founder and medical director of the Central PA Clinic in Belleville, PA, is worried about the COVID-19 infections and crowd. “A gathering of hundreds of people at a fund-raising dinner or benefit auction could easily become the source of an outbreak of COVID-19 in the [Amish and Mennonite] community,” noted Morton.

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According to Morton, each person who is infected and attends an event will pass the infection to an additional three to five people. The onset of symptoms for those who contract the illness at that event will be, on-average, 4.5 days later the event. Those who become ill, require hospitalization and intensive care, and survive will have prolonged and expensive hospital stays. Death and long hospital stays will happen most often in children and adults with underlying chronic diseases and in the elderly. For those who do not survive the illness, the median time from the start of the disease to death will be 12.5 days.

If you think that you might have COVID-19, you can get tested through local Clinics. Call your doctor or nurse for instructions BEFORE you go to their office and before you go to the hospital.

The Central PA Clinic in Belleville may soon be able to test for COVID-19 through CSI Labs in Huntingdon PA. For more information and to ask about the clinic's testing services, call the clinic at 717-935-2065.

You also can call the Pennsylvania COVID-19 hotline at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) if you are worried that you might have the disease or if you think you may need to be tested

COVID-19 is a very serious disease. Do what you can to help stop the spread.