

Columbus County
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
KIMBERLY L. SMITH, RN, BSN, MSHCA, DIRECTOR



PO Box 810
Whiteville, NC 28472

304 Jefferson Street
Tele: 910-640-6615
Fax: 910-640-1088

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 12, 2020

Columbus County, NC – The current risk of getting COVID-19 in Columbus County, NC is **LOW**. Columbus County Health Department (CCHD) is working daily with our local health care partners and the NC Department of Public Health since we first became aware in December 2019 to respond to the constantly evolving novel coronavirus (COVID-19). CCHD follows the guidance and protocol provided by the NC Department of Health and Human Services and the NC Department of Public Health. In addition to working with NCDHHS & NCDPH in this preparedness effort, we are also collaborating with our community partners to be prepared for COVID-19 and other emergencies. As always, know that we are all working very hard to prepare our community. We ask that everyone please assist us. Community residents can take many steps to help prevent the spread of illness, including COVID-19.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), common human coronaviruses usually cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illness, like the common cold. Symptoms may include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through the air by coughing or sneezing; close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands; and touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

The CDC advises that people follow these tips to help prevent respiratory illnesses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick with respiratory symptoms.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- If you have not already, get a flu shot and if you are eligible, a pneumonia shot. Make sure all of your vaccinations are up to date.

Please continue to follow the guidelines provided by public health. Please help us spread facts not fear.

NCDPH and local health departments have implemented heightened surveillance to identify and test patients most likely to have Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Public health experts are communicating with and educating health care providers and other public health partners about the current situation. Measures are being developed to prevent the spread of illness in North Carolina. Frequent communication with the public will be available through the NC Department of Health and Human Services website (<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina>). The NC Department of Health and Human Services have also launched the NC COVID-19 Call Center to answer questions that Local Health Departments, clinicians, and the general public may have regarding COVID-19 (866-462-3821).

For more accurate updates and information about COVID-19, we also recommend using reputable sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) websites – cdc.gov & who.int. For more information from the Columbus County Health Department, please visit us on Facebook ([Facebook.com/Columbuscountyhealth](https://www.facebook.com/Columbuscountyhealth)) or visit our website (Columbusco.org/Departments/Health-Department). For appointments or information, you can also reach the Columbus County Health Department by calling 910-640-6615.

####