LAKE COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT ANNOUNCES
NEW COVID-19 CASE INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

The surge in COVID-19 cases in Lake County since November 1 has made it necessary for Lake County General Health District (LCGHD) to revisit its case interview and contact tracing procedures, and prioritize activities that will maximize the number of lives saved. The difficult decision has been made to shift staff resources to conducting case interviews, and limit contact tracing activities for most confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Health Commissioner Ron H. Graham stated, “Systematic testing, contact tracing, and supported isolation and quarantine remain the cornerstone of an effective public health response to the COVID-19 epidemic. However, the ongoing high level of disease activity in Lake County, and across Ohio, is resulting in alarming numbers of cases and exposed contacts that exceed the capacity of the public health workforce in nearly all jurisdictions.”

“Similar to how hospitals postpone elective surgeries and prioritize care to certain high-risk patients, public health must prioritize and adjust to rapidly changing conditions in a community.”

Lake County residents can expect the following:

- LCGHD will only contact confirmed cases of COVID-19, rather than probable cases, reported via the Ohio Disease Reporting System. Interviews will be conducted to determine isolation periods, identify close contacts, and determine the risk of transmission to vulnerable populations.
- LCGHD is requesting confirmed cases communicate directly to their own close contacts to notify of possible exposure. LCGHD will conduct limited contact tracing only if those individuals are determined to be at high risk for severe disease, are critical infrastructure workers, or are at risk for creating an outbreak. As a result, contact tracing will not occur in most situations.

People diagnosed with COVID-19 who are having symptoms, as well as those who have tested positive for COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms, are instructed to isolate at home. When isolating at home, people should:

- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Monitor symptoms. Seek medical care immediately if having trouble breathing.
- Stay in a separate room from other household members, if possible.
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Avoid contact with other members of the household and pets.
- Clean and sanitize any commonly touched surfaces such as door knobs, remote controls, etc.
- Don’t share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
- Wear a mask when around other people living in the household.
Individuals with COVID-19 may discontinue isolation and resume normal activities when 10 days have passed since the first date of symptoms, they are fever-free for at least 24 hours using no fever-reducing medications, and symptoms have improved. Individuals with COVID-19 who have been without any symptoms may discontinue isolation 10 days from the date of their positive test.

Close contacts of individuals with COVID-19 should quarantine at home for 14 days. A close contact is someone who was within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, starting from two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, two days prior to test date) until the time the patient is isolated. During quarantine, a person should monitor their own temperature and look for symptoms of COVID-19. If possible, stay away from vulnerable or high-risk individuals living in the household. If someone with COVID-19 is unable to isolate from those living in their household, close contacts within the household must quarantine for an additional 14 days after the confirmed case’s original 10-day isolation period ends.

Additionally, in accordance with the Director’s Order for Retail and Business Compliance for Facial Coverings throughout the State of Ohio, signed November 13, 2020 by Interim Director of Health Lance Himes, LCGHD is now requesting that any citizen complaint regarding mask compliance be directed to the Ohio Department of Health call center at 1-833-4ASKODH (1-833-427-5634).

General questions regarding COVID-19 can be addressed to Lake County General Health District at covid19@lcghd.org or (440)350-2188. Visit www.lcghd.org for the most updated COVID-19 information.

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