FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19: Changes
By Dr. Michele Dikkers, Chair of Clayton County Board of Health

Changes…
We, all of us, are constantly bombard with change. It is what keeps life from getting boring.

Since March, we have had more than our share of changes. At the beginning of the pandemic, we experienced daily informational changes regarding COVID-19. Since then, I’d like to say it has slowed down. And some days there are no changes and then other days, there are a number of changes that seem to hit on the same day.

The Governor of Iowa and The Iowa Department of Public Health have recently announced significant changes regarding exposure.

It can be confusing, so let’s go through the changes.

This information is taken from guidance dated September 29, 2020 from the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Persons with symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate (this includes persons who test positive and persons who are not tested) until after these three things have happened:

- They have had no fever for at least 24 hours (that is one full day of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers) AND
- Their other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath has improved) AND
- At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared.

Persons with symptoms of COVID-19 who are tested, test negative AND who ARE NOT a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19, can go back to daily activities 24 hours after their fever and other symptoms resolve.

Persons with symptoms of COVID-19 who are tested, test negative AND who ARE a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19, should continue to self-quarantine until 14 days after their last exposure to the confirmed case.

Persons who test positive for COVID-19 but do not experience symptoms should self-isolate until:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of the first positive test AND
- They continue to have no symptoms (no cough or shortness of breath) since the test.
The guidance has changed regarding contact tracing, in Iowa. Previously, regardless of mask wearing, any contact with a person positive for COVID, required isolation. Now, in the state of Iowa, if you are wearing a mask and are exposed to a person with COVID, that IS ALSO wearing a mask, as long as you do not have symptoms, you do not need to isolate for 14 days.

- If you are not wearing a mask at the time of exposure, you will need to self isolate for 14 days, even if the infected person was wearing a mask.

- If the infected person is not wearing a mask, even if you are, you need to self isolate for 14 days.

- If you have been exposed, with or without masks, and develop symptoms, as it says above, you need to self isolate for 14 days, regardless of the outcomes of a test.

Exposure is considered close contact, less than 6 feet apart for more than 15 minutes. However, if you live in the same household, you are considered a close contact, even if you are wearing masks all of the time.

Long ago I learned from the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts that you should always “Do your best” and “always be prepared”. This continues to be true throughout life for all of us and maybe especially now. You may never know if or when you will be exposed to COVID-19, so “Do your best” and “be prepared”. Wear a mask, wash your hands and watch your distance. They are the best tools that we have.

Be well and remember, we are in this together.