What You Need to Know about the Fort Bend County COVID-19 Case

General Overview

- The Texas Department of State Health Services and Fort Bend County Health and Human Services report a positive test result for COVID-19.
- The patient is a Fort Bend County man in his 70s who recently returned from travel abroad and is currently isolated in the hospital.
- This is the first case in Texas outside of the passengers returned under federal quarantine from Wuhan City, China or the Diamond Princess cruise ship.
- Fort Bend County Health & Human Services is investigating to identify close contacts and will provide them guidance about the virus and monitor them for the development of symptoms.
- This patient does not increase the risk for the average Houstonian and there is no need for Houstonians to take out-of-the-ordinary action.
- The test was performed at the Houston Health Department lab and will be confirmed by testing at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, the test result is actionable.
- For the general public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 remains low.
- If you have not been around anyone with COVID-19 or have not visited an ongoing outbreak area, you are currently not considered to be at risk.
- Call your healthcare professional if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or if you live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.
- Your healthcare professional will work with your public health department and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.
- People should practice routine healthy hygiene habits to help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses like COVID-19, such as washing hands frequently, covering coughs and sneezes, avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth, and staying home if sick.
- From the research into COVID-19, we know that about 80 percent of cases are mild with most people not needing hospitalization. However, older adults and people with underlying health conditions like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes are at a greater risk of complications.
- There is no need to go to the emergency room unless you have a medical emergency. Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs.
What SHOULD Houstonians do?

Houstonians should go about their daily lives, but take certain precautions:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer when you can't wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue away. If you don't have a tissue, use the elbow of your sleeve. Don't use your hands to cover coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick and keep children home when they are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Get a flu shot. (Although the flu shot does not protect against COVID-19, it is flu season.)
- If you have fever, cough and/or shortness of breath, and recently traveled to an area with ongoing spread of coronavirus, or have been in close contact with someone who has recently traveled to any of those areas, go to your doctor. Call first to let them know about your symptoms and travel history.
- If you have these symptoms, but no travel history, stay home and call your doctor.
- Receiving health care is not a public benefit identified by the public charge test.

At this time:

- Houstonians DO NOT currently need to limit travel within the city.
- Houstonians DO NOT currently need to avoid public gatherings and public transportation.
- Houstonians DO NOT currently need to change anything about where they get your food or how it's prepared.
  - There is no need to wear a face mask if you are not sick. Face masks are only recommended if directed by a health care provider.
  - People wear protective face masks for many reasons, including seasonal allergies, pollution or protecting those around them from a common cold. They should not be harassed or targeted for wearing one.

Houston-specific COVID-19 updates, key messages, frequently asked questions, communication resources, rumor control, emergency preparedness tips and more is available at HoustonEmergency.org.

Updated: March 4, 2020