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Press Release

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There is one correction from yesterday. One case reported in Meade County should have been attributed to Hardin County. There is a total of 44 cases of COVID-19 in the Lincoln Trail District. Additional cases in Hardin, Nelson, and Marion Counties were confirmed today. The total number of cases per county is as follows: Hardin--20, LaRue--2, Marion—10, Meade--2, Nelson--7, and Washington--3.

Lincoln Trail District Health Department (LTDHD) has received many questions about its processes regarding COVID-19. In addition, misinformation about the virus is widespread. What we know about the virus is relatively new and changes almost daily. We would like to take this opportunity to address some of the questions and rumors we hear most often.

**Why doesn’t LTDHD release demographic information?** There is no value added in knowing details about cases, because you should already be doing the right things to protect you and your family against COVID-19. We have to remember that these numbers are real people and real families. By releasing details about the age and sex of cases, it can become very easy to figure out the individual’s identity in our rural communities. Not only can this lead to stigmatizing them during an already difficult time, but it also gives people a false sense of security that if they just avoid that particular person then they are safe from the virus.

**What is the difference between home isolation and quarantine?** Both are public health practices used to protect the public by preventing exposure to contagious diseases. Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. Quarantine restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. They may have been exposed and not know it, or they may have the disease but are not showing symptoms.

**What are some ways that I can be outside my home and still use social distancing?** If you choose to go outside your home for recreation, the key is to keep the proper six-foot distance. It is a good idea to carry hand sanitizer or wipes to clean your hands before you return to your vehicle or home. It is safe to go for a drive with your family or to use public walking trails if your entire family maintains the required distance from others. However, we cannot use outdoor activities as an excuse to gather such as hosting cookouts or playdates with neighborhood kids. Also, we cannot turn a trip for needed goods into a social outing by bringing the entire family.
What are some ways to clean and disinfect my home? COVID-19 lives on hard surfaces (e.g. light switches, remote controls, doorknobs) and soft porous surfaces (e.g. carpet, rugs, drapes). High touch areas should be cleaned and disinfected daily. Remove surface dirt with soap and water, and then use a household disinfectant. It is recommended to let the surface remain wet for a period of time. For soft surfaces such as carpet, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination and launder items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. If possible, use the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry completely. A bleach solution can also be used if safe for the surface. To make a bleach solution, mix 1/3 cup bleach per gallon of water. Alcohol-based wipes or sprays can be used on electronics such as keyboards and remote controls. There is no evidence that vinegar solutions are effective against COVID-19.

How long does COVID-19 live on surfaces? There is much we still do not know about how long COVID-19 can survive on surfaces. However, according to one recent study, scientists found that the virus was detectable for 24 hours on cardboard and up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel. Your chances of encountering COVID-19 increases every time you leave your house and touch a surface in public.

Should I be wearing a face mask every time I leave my home? Wearing a mask in combination with maintaining a physical separation of 6 feet, is the best practice in situations where distancing is difficult, such as at the grocery. Use of a cloth face mask does not replace the need to physically distance ourselves from others. Cloth face masks do free up valuable resources such as N95 and surgical masks for the very ill and medical personnel who truly need them. Wearing a cloth mask is not a guarantee that you will be fully protected from COVID-19, since respiratory droplets can enter cloth masks. It is vital that we still practice frequent hand washing and continue with all other preventive actions to reduce the spread, as we do not know exactly how long the virus can live on surfaces. Homemade masks should be created from a material that can be laundered—do not put masks into the microwave to disinfect them because that could start a fire.

Does COVID-19 only affect older people? People of all ages can be infected. Older people and people with chronic conditions appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus. While some children and infants have been sick with COVID-19, adults make up most of the cases to date. Children do not appear to develop serious symptoms with this disease, but they can be carriers of the virus and spread it to others.