

## Rural Communities

In the past few weeks Missouri has seen an increasing spread of COVID-19 from population centers to more rural communities. This is concerning as rural areas tend to have more limited access to health care and populations that are older and have more chronic health conditions. During this time that we all have a role in protecting our communities and limiting the spread of this disease. Whether you have COVID 19, are a caregiver of an individual with COVID 19 , or just going out in public places, there are actions that you should be taking.

### When leaving the home:

- Limit the number of people leaving the house.
  - Identify only one person that leaves to get groceries and other essential products.
- Practice Social Distancing.
  - Pay special attention when standing in line at to receive services, avoid large groups.
- Face Covering can help protect you and others.
  - If used, the face covering should be used properly.
- Stop hand shaking – practice good hygiene
  - Use other noncontact methods of greeting.
  - Increase habits and reminders to avoid touching your face and cover coughs and sneezes.
- Additional recommendations when leaving your home and prevention tips can be found at: <https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/pdf/individuals-leaving-home.pdf> and [Households Living in Close Quarters](#)

### An individual with COVID 19 should:

- Limit Contact with individuals.
  - Isolate themselves to a certain area or room of house.
  - Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Avoid sharing personal items, such as dishes, towels, or bedding. Eat in a separate room if possible.
- Call ahead before visiting a medical provider.
- Wear a facemask, if possible, when around other people or visiting healthcare facility.

### A caregiver of an individual with COVID 19 should:

- Help the individual follow their healthcare provider’s instructions and monitor symptoms.
- Separate themselves from the individual whenever possible.
  - Sleep in a separate bedroom and avoid sharing personal items if possible.
- Dispose of items properly.
  - Place all used gloves, masks, and any personal protective equipment, as well as any used cleaning materials, into a lined container before disposal.
- Clean and disinfect household.
  - All “high touch” surfaces such should be cleaned and disinfected daily.
  - Shared bathrooms should be cleaned by the ill individual, if possible.
  - Increase ventilation by opening windows.
- Additional recommendations and tips can be found at: [Caring for Someone Sick at Home \(or Other Non-healthcare Settings\)](#)

We must work together to protect our families, our friends and our communities from the spread of COVID-19. The information above, as well as additional educational materials, can be found at <https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/>.