

KANE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

What does Governor Pritzker's Stay-at-Home-Order mean for the residents of Kane County?

Governor Pritzker's Executive Order from March 20th, 2020, ordered all non-essential businesses to close and residents to limit all non-essential trips.

At this time, voluntary cooperation is needed from the public and from businesses to comply with this order.

Food shopping, essential medical visits, and caring for vulnerable community members are the only recommended activities for residents at this time.

Those residents who are more vulnerable to a severe reaction and the elderly should avoid ANY activities outside the home.

What is a pandemic? Aren't all the cases in Chicago or New York or California?

A pandemic is a global outbreak of disease.

Pandemics happen when a new virus emerges to infect people and can spread between people easily. Because there is little to no pre-existing immunity against the new virus, it spreads worldwide.

People take anywhere from 2-14 days to show symptoms, which means that we do not know the true number of cases in each community. Because people can transmit the virus, even when they do not have symptoms, you can't tell who may have it.

The numbers from today do not reflect the number of mild cases in any community in the United States. For the most up-to-date numbers for Kane County see: <http://kanehealth.com/>

What if my teenager or young adult won't follow the social distancing rules?

Be empathetic, persistent, and firm.

Teenagers and young adults are in a time of life when they are meant to develop their independence and be social; so this is particularly difficult on them.

Be flexible with other rules- now is the time to allow more screen time. Help them find other ways to connect with friends and family.

Allow them to make decisions about other things- let them choose dinner or when and how to do their schoolwork.

Work with other parents if they are continuing to allow social gatherings in their homes.

Where and how do I get tested for COVID-19?

Contact your primary care medical provider and they will determine if you should get testing.

Testing at this time is still limited.

Your doctor may encourage you to simply recover at home as there is not a specific medicine for COVID-19.

If you and your medical provider suspect that you have COVID-19, you should self-quarantine for 7 days AND until you have been fever-free for 72 hours, whichever is longer.

I've been laid off or furloughed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic-- what help is there for me?

Unemployment Insurance

The federal government passed a 2 trillion dollar stimulus package called the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Stimulus Act (CARES) that includes an expansion of unemployment benefits for those laid off or furloughed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It includes workers who did not previously qualify for traditional unemployment benefits including self-employed workers, part-time workers and gig workers.

As of April 1st, the State of Illinois was still processing unemployment claims for workers who applied under the normal unemployment rules.

The State is asking those who qualify under the expanded federal guidelines from the CARES Act to wait to apply until they open the application process.

Due to a dramatic increase in applications, depending on the letter of your last name there is a specific day of the week to apply.

For more details and to apply: <https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/Pages/default.aspx>

Paid Time Off

The bill also has provisions for **emergency paid sick time** and **emergency paid family leave** for those who are still working but have to stop due to falling ill, being quarantined, losing childcare, or caring for a family member.

Qualifying employers should start honoring these benefits as of April 1st, 2020.

For more details: <https://www2.illinois.gov/idol/Pages/default.aspx>

I've been laid off or furloughed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic-- what help is there for me?

Stimulus Payments

People who filed taxes in 2018 and 2019 whose information is correct in the IRS system can expect to receive a direct stimulus payment after April 17th.

Those who did not file in 2018 or 2019 will need to file a simple tax return with the IRS to qualify except those already drawing social security. They do not need to file and should automatically receive a payment.

Those who have moved or changed their banking information need to update their information.

Residents who file their taxes with an ITIN number are not eligible for stimulus payments.

For more information: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/economic-impact-payments-what-you-need-to-know>

Mortgage and Rent Payments

Homeowners who hold a federally backed mortgage can request 180 days of payment relief. Private lenders are not obligated to offer payment relief but many are doing so. If you have lost your income, you should contact your lender to obtain information on your options.

Those having trouble paying their rent, may have protection from eviction. Governor Pritzker's stay-at-home order of March 20th, 2020, prohibits evictions on residential properties for the duration of the Gubernatorial Disaster Declaration.

In addition, at the federal level, the CARES Act includes a nationwide moratorium on evictions for tenants whose landlords hold federally backed mortgages as well as prohibiting late payment charges.

For legal help and more information visit: <https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/get-legal-help>

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Emergency Funds

Some school districts, local governments, and local agencies have emergency funds. If you have school aged children, contact your children's school for referrals and information. You can also call 211 and ask for referrals.

How can I help my community and healthcare workers at this time?

The most important thing you can do at this time is **STAY HOME AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE**. Social distancing functions as a vaccine by slowing the spread of the virus. Coronavirus spreads quickly and people can spread it before they know they have it, so we need everyone to stay in their homes. If you must go out, practice social distancing by maintaining a distance of 6 feet from others. Wash your hands frequently and cover your nose and mouth for coughs and sneezes. If you show any symptoms of illness such as fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath, stay home and monitor your symptoms.

Check if your local hospital or fire station is collecting donations. Some hospitals are asking for hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, masks, gowns and gloves. Many organizations are now asking for homemade cloth masks in addition to other supplies.

Donate money to organizations providing needed services to those affected by this crisis.

In this time of hardship, we need to support our food pantries. Consider donating food or money and if you are not at risk for severe reaction, consider volunteering. Food pantries have been deemed an essential business and remain open.

If you are a healthcare worker, the State of Illinois, is recruiting healthcare workers to deal with the coming increase in COVID-19 affected patients. Visit IllinoisHelps.net to register.

For more volunteer opportunities see: www.Serve.Illinois.gov and Kane County Connects