As you probably know, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is starting to show up in more areas of our country, with 108 confirmed cases currently in the U.S. Although there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 currently in Arkansas (two cases are still under investigation), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) feels that more cases of COVID-19 are likely to be identified throughout the country in the coming days.

While there is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 and no approved treatment for this virus, standard methods used to prevent viral transmission can be very effective in protecting yourself and others against COVID-19. For this reason, the CDC recommends the following measures:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - The CDC defines “close contact” as being within six feet of someone who is ill for more than 1-2 minutes.
- Avoid being sneezed on or coughed on by someone who is sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily (e.g., tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles) using a regular household detergent and water or a disinfectant.
- Follow the CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask.
  - The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

Daily updates about COVID-19 in Arkansas are posted at 3 p.m. every day on the Arkansas Department of Health’s website: https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus