

Social interaction possible while in social distancing

Bonnie A. Coblentz
MSU Extension Service
Mississippi State University Extension experts join the chorus of voices urging all people to practice social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, saying this is crucial for older adults.

David Buys, health specialist with the MSU Extension Service, said social distancing refers to approaches known to stop or slow the spread of contagious diseases such as COVID-19.

The primary focus is physical distancing, which means individuals must get creative to maintain safe social interaction.

“Physical distancing means limiting or eliminating visits



Participating in outdoor activities such as gardening is one way to practice social distancing. Be sure to sanitize hands after touching public surfaces.
(File photo by MSU Extension Service/Michaela Parker)

to places where you'd interact with others, with bacteria or viruses in the air, or

contact with surfaces that may be contaminated with something that could make you ill,” Buys said. “It is different from quarantining, which means we intentionally stay in and away from people after we learn that we have been exposed to a contagious disease, even if we don't have any symptoms.”

Buys said social distancing is a general approach that limits normal, public routines such as shopping and socializing to broadly limit exposure to a known disease.

“Social distancing is something that everyone should engage in at a time like this -- even those who don't know if they have been exposed to a disease,” he said. “It helps slow the possible spread of a disease.”

Practically, this means maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from others and severely limiting what is

touched if a person has to leave the house. Use hand sanitizer after touching public surfaces. When possible, use sanitizing wipes on surfaces such as gas pumps and grocery carts. Always wash hands with soap and water when returning home.

“Older adults should practice strict social distancing for the foreseeable future,” Buys said. “Pay attention to information sources that meet the ABCs -- authoritative, bias-free and current -- such as the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Mississippi Department of Health and MSU Extension.”

Older adults, in general, may have more susceptibility to illness. To date, eight out of 10 COVID-19-related deaths reported in the U.S. have been in adults 65 years old and older.

Joe Wilmoth, professor of human development and family science in the MSU School of Human Sciences, said that while it is important to keep a physical distance during this time, people of all ages should continue to connect meaningfully in social ways through telephone, text, video conferencing and more.

“Older adults already are more prone to be isolated because of a variety of factors, and being separated from loved ones -- and people in general -- can be particularly hard,” Wilmoth said. “Being lonely or socially isolated is a risk factor for health problems, including early death, heart disease and dementia. Relationships often become a higher priority for people as they grow older, which

Holmes to continue online-only classes until April 20

Press Release
Holmes Community College President Dr. Jim Haffey announced on Wednesday, March 25, that the college will continue remote instruction until at least April 20 as the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak continues to be monitored.

“We are very anxious to resume a normal work schedule as soon as possible and will do so with a lot of energy as soon as it is safe to do so,” Dr. Haffey said. “Most college functions that were scheduled to occur before May 1 have been cancelled, but events (such as graduation) scheduled to occur after that time will continue to be evaluated.

“Our goal during this time continues to be to serve our customers and to do what is necessary to move our state forward,” Dr. Haffey said. “We have strong contingency plans and emergency funds in place for situations like this, and we want to make sure we continue moving forward.”

The college moved 788 academic and career technical classes to an online format on March 18, making Holmes one of the first schools

in the state to resume classes after Spring Break. Instructors, staff and administration will continue to provide instructional support to the 5,210 students as everyone navigates the uncertainties and inconveniences resulting from this global pandemic.

As one way to assist students, Holmes has identified several areas at each location where they can park and work on their assignments in their vehicle if they have limited access to wifi at their homes. This service is available from 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Additionally, Mississippi library systems are offering free wifi from the parking lots; visit <https://cutt.ly/xtv1duh> for a full list. The libraries participating is also being updated daily as more begin offering this service.

As administration continues to evaluate the best course of action for the college, students, faculty and staff will be notified of any changes to the schedule. Holmes will also provide updates as they are available on the college's social media sites and on the Holmes website at <https://www.holmescc.edu/administration/marketing/covid-19.aspx>.

compounds the importance of being socially connected while physically separated.”

Wilmoth said that active and healthy older adults can take the initiative to stay connected with friends and family through phone calls, video calls, text messaging and social media. Those confined to an institution may

need someone else to initiate contact through phone calls, letters and cards, or other appropriate means.

“We are seeing on social media that many people are finding creative ways to connect with nursing home residents by visiting or singing through windows, and some nursing homes are keeping residents physically separated but visually connected through such things as dancing and doing physical therapy in the halls.”

For more information on COVID-19 and best practices for older adults, visit <https://acl.gov/COVID-19>. The MSU Extension Service provides related educational information at <http://extension.msstate.edu/coronavirus>.

Obituaries

EDWARD SPENCER
Edward Spencer, 87, of Lexington, MS passed away on Friday, March 27, 2020. He was born to Frank and Kitty Beatrice Harthcock Spencer on March 25, 1933 at Coxburg, MS.

Edward is survived by his loving wife Ellan Keither Chisolm Spencer of 63 years, four children Yvonne (Gary) Natale of Carrollton, Texas, Edward Trent (Karin) Spencer of Vero Beach, Florida, Tracie (Carl) Moore of Scott, Mississippi and Teresa Spencer of Madison, Mississippi. Edward is also survived by five grandchildren Brandon

(Anita) Moore, Toni (Darell) Benton, William Spencer, Spencer Natale and Tanner Natale.

After serving in the Korean Conflict he returned and served as a police officer in Greenville, MS for 20 years and advanced to rank of Captain, after retiring he served as superintendent of streets department in Greenville for 20 years.

After retiring from Greenville, Edward and his wife moved to Tolarville, MS to make their home. He was a member of Oak Grove Baptist Church at Tolarville, MS. There will be a private family funeral service held.

ELDER CLINTON COBBINS

Lifelong resident of Lexington, MS, Elder Clinton Cobbins, pastor of the Life Changing Ministries Church of God In Christ Pickens, MS, former Mayor of the City of Lexington, retired Assistant Fire Chief City of Canton and retired Police Chief for the City of Tchula transitioned from his Earthly labor to his Heavenly reward on Tuesday, March 24, 2020.

Visitation will be held Friday, April 3, 2020 from 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. at Porter & Sons' Funeral Home, 237 Yazoo Street, Lexington, MS.

A Farewell Processional will be held Saturday, April 4 at 11:00 a.m. and immediately afterwards a

GRAVESIDE service will be held at 12:00 p.m. at Ebenezer Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery.

Memories will forever be cherished in the hearts of his loving and devoted wife, Karen Cobbins; three daughters, Camisha Cobbins (Ennis “Joe”) Locke, Jordan “Joy” (Demond) Howard and Meaghan Greer; two sons, Demetric Jermaine Gallion and Derrick James, Sr.; six grandchildren, Jaya Gallion, Khamryn Gallion, Jaylynn “Rooster” Locke, Derrick James, Jr., Noah James and Aidyn “Aidibug” Howard; seven brothers and five sisters; in-laws Rev. and Mrs. David Johnson, a host of nieces, nephews and other relatives.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, 4:00 P.M.

HENSON-KICKERNICK REUNION POSTPONED

The annual Henson-Kickernick reunion will be postponed until further notice due to the Corona Virus. 4-2,9

GENERAL INFO

The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) has activated the Mississippi COVID-19 hotline to answer questions from the general public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. For up-to-date information, call the hotline, check the MSDH website at HealthyMS.com/COVID-19, or download the free MS Ready app for Apple and Android. The Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention's website also has a wealth of information. The hotline number is 1-877-978-6453. tfn

SHILOH M.B.C.

Shiloh M.B. Church in Lexington will celebrate its Pastor and Wife's 15th Year Anniversary on Sunday, April 5, at 11:15 a.m. 3-26;4-2

NEWPORT M.B.C.

Newport M.B. Church will hold revival services from April 5 through April 7. Sunday night at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. all other nights. 3-26;4-2

TRINITY M.B.C.

Trinity M.B. Church will present its youth Easter program on Sunday, April 5, at 11 a.m. during morning service. 3-26;4-2

FRANKLIN P.C.

Franklin Presbyterian Church and Cemetery has cancelled is annual homecoming that was set for April 19, due to the coronavirus. The church plan's to host the 2021 homecoming the Sunday after Easter. Any questions please call 601-366-2184. 4-2,9

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