

March 9, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We understand that the Novel Coronavirus, known as COVID-19, is causing great concern in our community, country and the world. Central District Health (CDH) is working to provide you with the most up-to-date information on this rapidly evolving situation. CDH encourages you to seek reputable, timely information and recommends the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. Central District Health also offers a webpage, which includes local and statewide information at <https://cdh.idaho.gov/dac-coronavirus>.

What is Known

- The virus causing COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified and causes a respiratory illness ranging from a mild cold-like illness to severe pneumonia.
- Most (81%) of people diagnosed with COVID-19 in China had mild disease, including most children.
- Similar to influenza, the people who are most likely to have severe disease and complications from COVID-19 are older individuals (>60 years old) and those with other medical conditions like heart and lung disease or diabetes.
- There is no vaccine or treatment currently available for COVID-19 but the National Institutes of Health is evaluating treatments and developing a vaccine already.
- Currently, there is NO confirmed community spread of COVID-19 in Idaho, meaning the virus is not being spread from person-to-person. CDH is preparing for when/if this happens.

How the Virus Spreads

- COVID-19 is believed to spread primarily the same way the common cold or flu spreads—through respiratory droplets that are produced when someone coughs or sneezes.
- People who are most at risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 are those who have been in close contact (within about 6 feet) with someone who has the disease.
- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread of the virus might be possible before a person has symptoms; there have been reports of this with COVID-19, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

What You Can Do Now

- Keep children home when they are sick.
 - Students (and parents/guardians) who are ill, especially with acute respiratory symptoms (not allergies or chronic conditions), should stay home.
- Teach your children to always cover their cough and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
- Tell children to avoid touching their eyes, mouth and nose since that is how germs get into the body.
- Remind them to wash their hands with soap and water (or use hand sanitizer) after they touch their face, use the restroom and before they eat.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects (everyday household disinfectants are fine)

- Enhance cleaning of high touch surfaces like door knobs, toilet handles, and sink handles.
- Plan for when community spread occurs.
 - Ensure you have a plan to designate a caregiver, such as a family member or neighbor, for a sick child(ren) if you can't stay home.
 - Pay attention to school and/or school district communications, such as emails, phone calls, emergency text messages or by checking their websites.

Because most people with COVID-19 have mild disease, the likelihood that CDH will recommend closing schools is very low, but not zero. In the unlikely chance that CDH has to shut down your child's school due to a COVID-19 outbreak, it is important for parents/guardians to have a plan for who could take care of your child.

CDH's team is working all hours to monitor this evolving situation, and will continue to provide new information to the community as things change. Please contact your school leadership or healthcare provider should you have additional questions.

For credible and timely sources of information, we suggest the following resources:

- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
 - How you can get your household ready for COVID-19
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/index.html>
- Central District Health: <https://cdh.idaho.gov/dac-coronavirus>
- State of Idaho: www.coronavirus.idaho.gov
- Central District Health Information Call Center, open weekdays from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm: 208-321-2222.

Sincerely,
Central District Health