

GRANT COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT HEALTH ADVISORY
3/6/2020

We know that COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) is in our communities, and likely above the number of cases we already know. Most cases of COVID-19 are mild to moderate and most people who get this virus will recover and be just fine, however, it does have a higher death rate than seasonal flu. The elderly, anyone with reduced immune system or other serious health problems such as diabetes and heart disease will be at a higher risk of more severe illness.

We will not be able to stop COVID-19 completely, but there are things that we can do as a community to reduce the number of cases and the impact it has on Grant County. Grant County Health District is recommending, but not requiring, the following steps to minimize public contact and spread of novel coronavirus:

High Risk People: People at higher risk of severe illness should stay home and away from large groups of people as much as possible, including public places with a lot of people and large gatherings where there will be close contact with others. People at higher risk include:

- People 60 and older
- People with underlying health conditions including heart disease, respiratory illness and diabetes
- People who have weakened immune systems
- People who are pregnant

Workplace: Workplaces should enact measures that allow people who can work from home to do so. Taking these measures can help reduce the number of workers who come into contact with COVID-19 and help minimize absenteeism due to illness.

Events: If you can feasibly avoid bringing large groups of people together, consider postponing events and gatherings. This recommendation is for both private and public events.

If you can't avoid bringing groups of people together:

- Urge anyone who is sick to not attend.
- Encourage those who are at higher risk for coronavirus to not attend.
- Try to find ways to give people more physical space so that they aren't in close contact as much as possible.



- Encourage attendees to maintain good healthy habits, such as frequent hand washing.
- Clean surfaces frequently. Standard cleaning products are effective against COVID-19.

Schools: GCHD is not recommending closing schools and childcare at this time. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, GCHD will work with the school or facility to determine the best measures including potential closure. Closure is not recommended now mainly because current evidence indicates young people have a far lower risk of serious illness from this virus than other people. Parents of children with reduced immune system or with chronic diseases should discuss with their provider the possibility of keeping the child out of school or childcare.

Healthcare: Generally, avoid medical settings unless necessary. Healthcare facilities are overwhelmed. If you are feeling sick call your doctor's office first before going in. Even if you are not ill, avoid visiting hospitals, long term care facilities or nursing homes to the extent possible. If you do need to visit one of these facilities limit your time there and keep 6 feet away from other patients. Do not go to the emergency room unless essential. Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs. If you have symptoms like cough, fever, or other respiratory problems, contact your regular doctor first.

Everybody Can Do Something! Every person can make a difference by doing the following:

- Avoid going out if you feel sick.
- Wash hands often and vigorously with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water is not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, saturating the skin surface and rubbing for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick and avoid close contact (less than 6 feet away) with others.
- If you have a cold or cough and need to see a provider, always call first to be sure they know you are coming so their staff can take appropriate precautions.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Don't shake hands, bump elbows.
- Use sanitizing wipes or solutions (normal household products work) on frequently touched surfaces and objects at home and at work.
- Take good care of yourself to stay healthy, including adequate sleep and good nutrition.

(Thanks to Public Health Seattle King County for the advisory language above.)
