



**Always working for a safer & healthier Grant County**

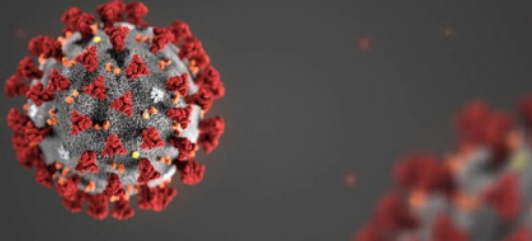


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## Updates for COVID-19 in Grant County, WA

**Grant County COVID-19 Updates**

Always working for a Safer & Healthier Grant County!



Updates for COVID-19 in Grant County will be posted as information becomes available. For more resources and information on COVID-19 please [click here](#).

### **2019 COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) in Grant County**

Tables will be updated at 5:00pm

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Search:

CASE COUNT	LAST UPDATED: 3/19/2020 (16:45)
Positive (includes deaths)	8
Negative	52
Probable	2

Deaths	1
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Estimated number of pending test results	68
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### SEX (AT BIRTH)

Male	5
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Female	3
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### AGE RANGE IN YEARS

0-18	0
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19-40	3
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41-60	2
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61-80	2
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80+	1
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### COMMUNITY OF RESIDENCE

Coulee City	0
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Ephrata	1
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Grand Coulee	0
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Mattawa	2
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Moses Lake	0
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Quincy	5
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Royal City	0
Soap Lake	0
Warden	0

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Probable test results are pending confirmation at the Washington State Public Health Lab or pending tests that epi-linked to confirmed cases.

## March 19, 2020 – 5:20 pm

There was one new confirmed case reported today, bringing the total to 8 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Grant County. The newest patient, a female Ephrata resident, has not experienced severe illness and is in home isolation. There is an additional probable case under investigation as well. There are now three Grant County communities with confirmed cases of COVID-19. At this point, we should assume it is present throughout the county and state.

We are aware that the table of case numbers on the [DOH website](#) listed an additional Grant County case yesterday. That was an error; our 8<sup>th</sup> case did not get confirmed until late last night. We still plan to update our table at 5 pm daily. We appreciate all those who are following closely our local updates, as well as statewide data.

Today, several local law enforcement agencies verbalized their support in enforcement of the Governor’s proclamation that required several businesses and all restaurant dining areas to close, as well as prohibiting gatherings of 50 or more people. These measures were put into place to help slow the spread of this virus in our communities to protect our vulnerable citizens and prevent our healthcare system from being overwhelmed. It takes everyone’s cooperation for this to work. Thank you to all those complying with these orders, as well as our local law enforcement agencies who are willing to help enforce this.

For retailers, churches and other places with gatherings of less than 50 people who have not been required to close during this time, **you must implement safety measures to reduce the chance of the virus spreading in your facilities, in order to remain operational.** To see the full list of these COVID-19 safety measures in English, Spanish and Ukrainian, click [here](#).

## March 18, 2020 -6:25 pm

No new cases of COVID-19 were reported today. However, there are now several pending tests and we expect additional cases to be confirmed in the coming days. We have contacted hundreds of potential close-contacts of our confirmed cases and have many people in quarantine. We appreciate everyone’s cooperation with these measures. Even those not in quarantine, should be now be limiting their public exposure and practicing social distancing when they must go in public.

Employers should be implementing safety measures within their facilities and with their employees to help reduce chances of transmission of the virus. Some things we have implemented here at GCHD are:

1. Closing our front office to reduce in-person interaction with the public
2. Daily staff symptom checks to make sure no one works while sick
3. Limiting in-person meetings to less than 10 people so we can maintain at least 6' away from each other
4. Increased cleaning and sanitizing of frequently touched surfaces like door handles, sink handles, copy machine buttons, etc.
5. Vigilant handwashing when entering the building

For more information about what you can do at your workplace to protect your employees and coworkers from Coronavirus, go to the WA Department of Health [website](#).

## March 17, 2020 – 5:30 pm

No new cases of COVID-19 reported today. Staff worked throughout the day conducting follow up of contacts of cases tied to the two community clusters (Quincy and Mattawa).

Additional outreach and lots of question-answering took place with businesses, members of the public and schools about the temporary ban on onsite consumption of food and beverages, school food programs and about general retail and service business operations during the ban.

Additional messaging was shared with employers regarding COVID-19 testing of asymptomatic employees for “work clearance.” See below.

### COVID-19 Message to Employers – 3/17/20

We have learned that some local employers are sending non-symptomatic employees to obtain COVID-19 tests in order to document they are not infected with the virus. In the absence of specific covid-like symptoms, or other specific circumstances involving close contact with infected people, this is not an appropriate use of the limited testing capacity. It also results in a lot of unhappy employees, who discover that tests are not actually done for that purpose. To our knowledge, this is not being done anywhere in the United States and is unlikely to occur even when testing resources have improved greatly. If you are an employer, please do not hinder access to justifiable testing by attempting to have your employees tested just in case.

At GCHD, we are impressed at the calm and dedicated way our communities are implementing some very difficult measures. We are doing it because it protects our families and neighbors, but it is not easy. Thanks to everyone in our area for making this work. You are helping to save lives.

Stay informed and follow our web site for more information: <http://granthealth.org/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/>

## March 16, 2020 – 4:45 pm

### Seven Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in Grant County

Clusters identified in Mattawa and Quincy

*Grant County, WA* – GCHD has been notified of several new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our county, with several additional linked, suspect cases under investigation. The additional confirmed and suspect cases have been tied to case clusters in the communities of Quincy

and Mattawa, which is evidence of community spread. However, it is likely that cases will be confirmed in additional Grant County communities in the next several days.

Staff are working around the clock to identify and put into quarantine all those who had close contact with these individuals.

With increasing number of COVID-19 cases, GCHD urges Grant County residents to take very seriously the recommendations to limit social contacts and minimize the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Because case numbers are expected to increase day-to-day throughout the remainder of this outbreak, information will be provided in daily updates on our [website](#):

[www.granthealth.org/updates-for-covid-19-in-grant-county/](http://www.granthealth.org/updates-for-covid-19-in-grant-county/). A detailed table of cases will be updated by 5 pm each day and will include age range, gender and city of residence of confirmed cases. Updates will also be shared on the GCHD Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/GCHD.WA](https://www.facebook.com/GCHD.WA). Official media releases will no longer be published for case number reporting. Please continue to stay informed as information is changing very rapidly.

**GCHD has three requests for our residents:**

- **Be patient and kind.** COVID-19 is here, and we are learning more daily.
- **Follow the Governor's Orders.** These measures will be temporary but essential to slow this virus spread so the most vulnerable in our community can get the care they will need from our healthcare system.
- **Check in on friends and neighbors.** Start with a call or text. Practice social distancing but make sure they are well. Many in our community are scared or need help.

**Additional Resources:**

Washington Department of Health: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

COVID-19 FAQ:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/NovelCoronavirusFactSheet.pdf>

**March 15, 2020 – 2:30pm**

(pdf of letter available on our [Media Release page](#))

To: Mattawa Faith Community

From: Grant County Health District

Subject: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Exposure

This letter is to inform the Mattawa faith community that Grant County Health District has received positive COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) test results for one of the local parish priests. He is a male in his 40s who is hospitalized and being cared for. Those who have had close contact with this individual have been contacted by the Health District. We continue to work with the Yakima Diocese to locate and contact additional people. Below is a list of times and locations where you may have been exposed.

- 2/26/2020, 7:00am and 12:00 PM – Mass at Our Lady of the Desert Parish, Mattawa
- 2/26/20 6:00 PM – St. Michael's Archangel Catholic Church, Royal City
- 3/1/20 12:00 PM & 5:00 PM – Mass at Our Lady of the Desert Parish, Mattawa

We are asking you to follow these steps:

- Those with a contact to a person with COVID-19 within 6 feet should immediately quarantine themselves at home and contact GCHD (if not already contacted)
- The rest should monitor their health for fever, cough and shortness of breath during the 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with the sick person.
- If you are sick or get sick call your healthcare provider before you go into the clinic or hospital for evaluation and testing.

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a novel coronavirus with the most common symptoms being fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Most people with COVID-19 will have mild sickness but some people will get sicker and may need to stay in the hospital.

If you were not at the events listed above your risk is lower for infection. You can continue to go to work and you should monitor your health for 14 days and stay away from others if you get sick.

Health conditions that may increase your risk for a serious infection—age 60 years or older, are pregnant, or have medical conditions (like diabetes, hypertension, lung, heart, kidney or immune system diseases)—contact your physician's office and tell them that you were exposed to someone with COVID-19. They may want to monitor your health more closely or test you for COVID-19.

If you do not have a high-risk condition but want medical advice, call your healthcare provider and tell them you were exposed to someone with COVID-19. Your healthcare provider can help you decide if you need to be seen in person. There are currently no medications to treat COVID-19.

GCHD strongly advises our communities of faith to make most urgent steps toward protecting our vulnerable in a unified and coordinated way. It is time to protect our communities by distancing from each other even when worshipping, which could be a challenge but also is a unique opportunity to bring us together. Any gatherings or contacts within 6 feet outside of our home and non-essential to life should not be occurring. It is our collective wisdom to recognize that early, persistent and consistent distancing and hygiene interventions will make a difference and will save lives.

These are the times that faith brings us together— times, when those around us need assurance that we're not alone, and that together we will get through whatever lies ahead. Now is the time to care for one another in acts of kindness and love. Remember that we do not walk this road alone.

Please, if you need groceries, a meal, conversation, a pharmacy run, or anything else, contact your neighbor, family or friends. Discuss with them how to safely deliver you goods if you are sick. Many volunteers are ready to help, but we must look out for everyone's safety. We really are all in this together.

If you become sick and go to the doctor, please show them this letter.

## March 15, 2020 – 2:30pm

**Grant County Now Has THREE Confirmed Cases of COVID-19**, Additional Cases Likely

GCHD was notified of a third positive test result of COVID-19 in our county. The third patient, who has not been linked to the other cases, was the probable case reported on Friday that additional testing was needed. This patient, a male in his 40's, who had foreign travel prior to his illness and is a priest with the Catholic Church in Mattawa, WA. He is still hospitalized. Staff are working closely with the Yakima Diocese to identify additional close contacts and asking those individuals to stay home on self-quarantine for 14 days from their last exposure. A letter with times and locations of when the priest conducted mass and other meetings/gathers will be shared with the parish members. The Yakima Diocese will be doing a media release. On Friday GCHD send guidelines to our faith community. We continue to strongly advise our communities of faith to make most urgent steps toward protecting our vulnerable in a unified and coordinated way. It is time to protect our communities by distancing from each other even when worshipping, which could be a challenge but also is a unique opportunity to bring us together. Any gatherings or contacts within 6 feet outside of our home and non-essential to life should not be occurring. It is our collective wisdom to recognize that early, persistent and consistent distancing and hygiene interventions will make a difference and will save lives. We are urging the public to do their part to help minimize the spread of COVID-19 by doing the following:

**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.

Employers should consider continued compensation when possible, along with all other measures to sustain those temporarily laid off. We urge all community groups – including social service organizations, faith-based organizations, schools and PTOs, and others – to take the initiative right now to organize efforts to sustain high risk and laid-off people with whom you are associated, with food and household supplies.

Financial institutions should implement all possible policies easing debt, mortgage deadlines, and related obligations for the duration of this pandemic

**Events:** If you can feasibly avoid bringing groups of 20 or more people together, consider postponing events and gatherings. This recommendation is for both private and public events. Gatherings of 250 people or more are prohibited for the time being under the Governor's Executive Order.

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.

Ticketholders of fundraising events that have been cancelled due to COVID-19, please consider donation of the cost of your ticket, as opposed to requesting a refund, as many non-profit organizations rely on these funds for charitable causes.

Schools: GCHD supports the Governor's executive order to close schools.

Healthcare and Long-Term Care (Nursing homes): 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.

"We would like to thank all of our staff, healthcare partners, Grant County Sheriff's Emergency Management Division, volunteers, and the community for your amazing cooperation. I know you are having to make tough choices that are impacting your way of life. We are all in this together and it takes a dedicated team like you to slow the spread of this virus in our community," Theresa Adkinson GCHD Administrator.

Additional Resources:

- [Washington Department of Health](#)
- [CDC](#)



- [COVID-19 FAQ](#)
- [GCHD](#)

## March 13, 2020 – 4:50pm

### Grant County Now Has Two Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

An additional probable case is under investigation. GCHD was notified today of a second positive test result of COVID-19 in our county. The second patient, a male Quincy resident in his 60's, has been linked to the first patient from Quincy. This individual has not experienced severe illness and is in isolation.

Additionally, a third patient, who has not been linked to the other cases, is under investigation as a "probable" case in south Grant County. This patient, a male in his 40's, did have foreign travel prior to his illness. He is currently hospitalized. More details on this case will be released if confirmed.

Staff are working overtime to identify and call all those who had close contact with these two individuals to ensure proper quarantines are in place and prevent others from being infected. However, we expect additional cases will be confirmed in our communities.

GCHD completely supports President Trump's Declaration of National Emergency for this outbreak response and Governor Inslee's Executive Order for social distancing, including school closures and banning of large gatherings. A comprehensive national strategy is necessary to shut this pandemic down.

"Anyone staying home from work when sick or telecommuting, cancelling events or modifying business operations to minimize the spread of this virus is doing their civic duty and should be commended by the rest of us. The only way we will stop this pandemic is by separating ourselves from each other and by following simple hygiene and cough etiquette techniques" states Dr. Brzezny, Grant County Health Officer.

We are urging the public to do their part to help minimize the spread of COVID-19 by doing the following:

**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.

Employers should consider continued compensation when possible, along with all other measures to sustain those temporarily laid off. We urge all community groups – including social service organizations, faith-based organizations, schools and PTOs, and others – to take

the initiative right now to organize efforts to sustain high risk and laid-off people with whom you are associated, with food and household supplies.

Financial institutions should implement all possible policies easing debt, mortgage deadlines, and related obligations for the duration of this pandemic

Events: If you can feasibly avoid bringing groups of 20 or more people together, consider postponing events and gatherings. This recommendation is for both private and public events. Gatherings of 250 people or more are prohibited for the time being under the Governor's Executive Order.

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.

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Schools: GCHD supports the Governor's executive order to close schools.

Healthcare and Long-Term Care (Nursing homes): 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.

“We would like to thank all of our staff, healthcare partners, Grant County Sheriff’s Emergency Management Division, volunteers, and the community for your amazing cooperation. I know you are having to make tough choices that are impacting your way of life. We are all in this together and it takes a dedicated team like you to slow the spread of this virus in our community,” Theresa Adkinson GCHD Administrator.

Additional Resources:

Washington Department of Health: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

COVID-19 FAQ:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/NovelCoronavirusFactSheet.pdf>

GCHD: <http://granthealth.org/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/>

Consultation:

- Media Inquiries:

Theresa Adkinson, Administrator

(509) 793-3520 during non-business hours 509-766-7960 ext. 24 during business hours.

- Grant County General Public: (509) 766-7960 ext. 39 or email to [info@granthealth.org](mailto:info@granthealth.org)

## March 12, 2020 – 12:30 pm

In response to the Governor’s Proclamation to minimize COVID-19 (Coronavirus) exposure in King, Snohomish and Pierce Counties, GCHD staff worked with colleagues at Chelan-Douglas Health District and Okanogan Public Health to create a joint message regarding public health interventions to minimize exposure to COVID-19 for the residents of North Central Washington and to lessen the impact of the outbreak on our communities. As of today, there have been a total of six (6) cases of COVID-19 reported in Eastern WA—one in Grant County, three in Kittitas County and two in Yakima County. See below or click [here](#) for the full document.

### Joint Public Health Recommendations for COVID-19

Grant County Health District, Chelan-Douglas Health District & Okanogan Public Health –  
March 12, 2020

On March 11, 2020, Governor Inslee issued a Proclamation to minimize COVID-19 (Coronavirus) exposure, particularly in counties hit hardest by the virus. Starting March 11, 2020, *events that take place in King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties with more than 250 people are prohibited by the state*. This order applies to gathering for social, spiritual, and recreational activities. This includes but is not limited to: community, civic, public, leisure, faith-based, or sporting events; parades; concerts; festivals; conventions; fundraisers and similar activities.

“This is an unprecedented public health situation and we can’t wait until we’re in the middle of it to slow it down. We’ve got to get ahead of the curve. One main defense is to reduce the interaction of people in our lives.” – Governor Inslee

Currently, COVID-19 has been confirmed in 13 counties in Washington, including three eastern Washington counties—Grant, Kittitas and Yakima—and has resulted in 29 deaths statewide. There is confirmed significant community spread in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.

## North Central Washington

Chelan-Douglas Health District, Grant County Health District, and Okanogan County Public Health are urging and recommending residents of our counties **voluntarily follow Governor Inslee's proclamation and reduce large gatherings**. The Health Districts are firmly recommending this proactive step to minimize exposure to COVID-19 for our residents and to lessen the impact it has on our communities.

We recognize and understand the substantial impact these actions can have on our residents and communities. We have carefully weighed the risks and benefits of this recommendation. These actions are the most effective tools we have available to help slow the spread of the virus in our communities and protect our vulnerable residents.

### Alternatives

If you are hosting an event or gathering, please consider the following alternatives:

- Utilize available technology options (e.g. livestreaming, virtual meetings), or
- Cancel or postpone the event until these recommendations have been lifted

If you have plans to attend an upcoming event or gathering, we encourage you not attend to protect yourself, your family, and the people you come in contact with on a daily basis.

### Large events and gatherings

While we are recommending eliminating events on more than 250 people, all gatherings of people can pose risks. Any size gathering should ensure the following:

- Older adults and individuals with chronic medical conditions are encouraged not to attend
- Recommendations for social distancing and limiting close contact are met
- Employees or volunteers leading an event are screened for symptoms each day
- Proper hand washing, sanitation, and cleaning is readily available
- Environmental cleaning guidelines are followed (e.g., clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily or more frequently)

### Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

Remember to take every day preventative action to slow the spread of COVID-19.

1. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water; if unavailable, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
2. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing
3. Avoid large gatherings and close contact (less than 6 feet away) with others
4. Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces
5. Stay home and away from others if you are sick

### Schools

At this point, we are not recommending closing schools, but we are watching the outbreak closely and may determine that school closures are necessary. **Schools should take steps now to prepare for the possibility of prolonged mandatory closures.**

In particular, schools should plan for how to continue to provide non-educational supports for their students such as providing food, developmental disability supports, and school-based healthcare.

## Collective action can save lives

We all have people in our lives who are high-risk. We all are one mishap away from needing access to a functioning hospital. We all have a lot at stake.

Giving up social events will not be easy, and the impacts on businesses and jobs may be significant. But this is our best chance to save lives. It is in support of the most vulnerable in our community, and a protection for everyone.

The more united we can be in preventing the spread – be in this together – the greater the benefit for the whole community.

## March 10, 2020 – 6 pm

We are continuing to respond to the evolving coronavirus situation.

**Case Numbers:** There is still only one (1) confirmed case of COVID-19 in Grant County as of today. A table of updated case numbers is now on our [website](#) and will be updated as information is received. We also updated the gender information of our case and will continue to report gender and age range of confirmed cases in the future.

**Test Numbers:** COVID-19 testing has become much more readily available to our residents, which we are very thrilled about. Several private labs are now offering the test and healthcare providers can work directly with those labs to submit specimens. Because of this, we are not aware of every test being submitted, and therefore, are no longer able to report the number of people being tested. However, we are keeping in close communication with healthcare providers to ensure they have the most current guidance on testing, treating, quarantining, isolating, etc. We will be updating the table above as results are reported to us.

**Long-Term Care Facilities:** Among many other things, GCHD staff worked diligently today with owners and managers of long-term care and assisted living facilities, nursing homes, adult-family homes and senior centers to provide them with guidance and support they need to prepare and be proactive in protecting residents of their facilities from this virus. Governor Jay Inslee announced [new rules](#) today around nursing homes and assisted living facilities that focus on better protecting older adults – a population more likely to be hit by COVID-19 (coronavirus). These facilities are being urged to limit visitors, cancel or postpone activities and institute active monitoring of symptoms in their residents. Our thoughts are with the families and staff of the long-term care facilities affected by this outbreak on the west side of the state, as well as our public health colleagues responding to this outbreak from King and Snohomish counties.

## March 9, 2020 – 6:30pm

FAQ: Why aren't you closing schools?

Currently there is not widespread community presence of COVID-19 in Grant County. Most information about school closures come from influenza outbreaks; this is a different virus. In

general, school closures are not recommended now because current evidence indicates young people have a far lower risk of serious illness from this virus than other people AND children out of school often congregate in multiple locations in the community, potentially getting exposed or passing the virus. When schools do close, often caregivers for dismissed children are elderly (i.e. grandparents) which could increase the risk of spread to that high-risk group. School closures have other impacts on working parents, and parent healthcare workers may not be able to come work as a result. It also affects vulnerable children who rely on school meal programs. Overall, school closures can be disruptive and costly for families. The exact timing of school closures is also uncertain. School closures for viral illness are most effective when they last for longer than 4 weeks and when community spread is increasing. If schools are closed too early, it may not be an effective strategy to reduce infections. Even with the best timing, school closures for COVID-19 may have only modest effect in rural communities.

We consider both the potential benefits and negative consequences of closures when we make recommendations. Working with the WA Department of Health, CDC, and statewide Health Officers, we are assessing the need for school closures weekly. As we learn more about this virus and as the situation in our county changes, it may still become our recommendation to close schools.

Caregivers of children with underlying health conditions should consult with healthcare providers about whether their children should stay home, especially when the virus presence is increasing.

### **March 9, 2020 – 3:00pm**

We received feedback and questions regarding a statement in our recent media release comparing coronavirus (COVID-19) to seasonal flu (influenza), in terms of how “deadly” it is. To clarify, that statement was referring to the “mortality rate” of coronavirus. Mortality rate means, how many of those patients with confirmed COVID-19 died of the virus. Doctors and scientists are working on estimating the mortality rate of COVID-19, but at present, it is thought to be higher (between 2% to 4%) than that of most strains of the flu. Each year, seasonal influenza affects millions of Americans and kills hundreds of thousands, however, the average mortality rate is around 0.1%. So yes, influenza affects MANY more people than coronavirus has, but currently, the mortality rate of influenza is much lower than coronavirus.

Find the most recent COVID-19 case numbers:

U.S.case counts (CDC website): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>

Washington State case counts: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>

### **March 9, 2020 – 2:50pm**

Returning Travelers Advisory:

Travelers who have recently returned from countries with widespread, ongoing community spread of COVID-19 (“Level 3 Travel Notice” countries)—currently China, South Korea, Iran and Italy—are advised to stay home for 14 days and monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, trouble breathing).

<https://www.cdc.gov/.../travele.../after-travel-precautions.html>

March 8, 2020 – 4:00PM

### First Grant County Resident Death from Coronavirus (COVID-19)

GRANT COUNTY, WA – Grant County Health District (GCHD) has received notice that the patient with confirmed COVID-19, previously reported, has sadly passed away. GCHD has and will continue to follow up with close contacts of this patient.

“I will start this press release by stating our hearts are with the family, friends, and Central Washington Hospital staff,” states Theresa Adkinson, Health District Administrator. “I speak on behalf of our staff, Health Officer, and Board of Health, we are so sorry for your loss.” “Please heed our advice and review the remainder of this press release and the important information we need you to follow.”

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.

There are many conversations in the community and on social media regarding whether this is serious. Yes, many of our residents will recover quickly with mild to moderate symptoms. However, we all need to take precautions to protect our most vulnerable populations and slow this disease. This illness can be fatal. Please heed our advice.

**GCHD is asking that the public do their part to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 by doing the following:**

**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 and children out of school often congregate to multiple locations in the community, potentially getting exposed or passing the virus. 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 and Long-Term Care (Nursing homes):** 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.

*We would like to thank all of our staff, healthcare partners, Grant County Sheriff's Emergency Management Division, volunteers, and the community for your amazing cooperation. We are all in this together and it takes a dedicated team like you to slow the spread of this virus in our community.*

**Additional Resources:**

Washington Department of Health: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>



CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

COVID-19 FAQ:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/NovelCoronavirusFactSheet.pdf>

GCHD: <http://granthealth.org/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/>

**Consultation:**

- **Healthcare Consultation:**  
Maria Vargas, Community Public Health Manager  
(509) 766-7960 ext. 19 or [mvargas@granthealth.org](mailto:mvargas@granthealth.org)
- **Media Inquiries:**  
Theresa Adkinson, Administrator  
(509) 793-3520 during non-business hours 509-766-7960 ext. 24 during business hours.
- Grant County General Public: (509) 766-7960 ext. 39 or email to [info@granthealth.org](mailto:info@granthealth.org)
- Chelan-Douglas Health District: Veronica Farias (509) 886-6427
- Samaritan Hospital: Gretchen Youngren (509) 793-9647
- Central WA Hospital/Confluence Health: Andrew Canning (509) 436-6806 Ext. 66806

Child Passenger Safety

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Chronic Disease Prevention

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Healthy Eating

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Physical Activity

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Wildfires & Smoke

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Tobacco

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Resources

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Drowning Prevention

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Pedestrian and Bike Safety

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Accidental Poisoning

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Quincy Partnership for Youth

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Vaping

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Seasonal Safety

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SNAP-Ed

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Moses Lake Breastfeeding Coalition

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Local Farmers Markets

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Healthy Holiday's

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Be Prepared for Emergencies

Extreme Heat

5-2-1-0 Grant County Go!

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## CONNECT



## PROGRAMS & SERVICES

- Birth/Death Certificates
- Foodworker Cards
- Public Record Request
- Food Permits
- Immunizations

## CONTACT US

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## CHOOSE ANOTHER LANGUAGE

Select Language