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# Health Department

[Home](#) > [Your Government](#) > [Departments](#) > [Health Department](#) > [Communicable Disease](#) > [Topics](#) > [Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

## Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Page updated: Sunday, March 15, 2020 at 5:17 pm

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- [Public Health Recommendations](#)
- [Case Information](#)
- [School Closures](#)
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- [Testing for COVID-19](#)
- [Resources for Healthcare Providers](#)
- [Guidance for Businesses and Community Organizations](#)
- [Latest News & Updates](#)
- [FAQs](#)

If you have questions about COVID-19, call the Washington State Department of Health hotline at 1-800-525-0127 and press #.

### 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Whatcom County

*This information will be updated daily at 12:00pm, or sooner if significant developments occur. Last updated: Sunday, March 15, 2020 11:32pm.*

As of Saturday, March 14, changes to the Washington Disease Reporting System (WDRS) have simplified the way we receive information about negative test results by county. Therefore, there is a large increase in the cumulative total of negative results in today's update. This number includes the total number of tests for COVID-19 for Whatcom County with a negative result that have been entered into WDRS to date. These results may be reported through the state public health lab, the UW lab, or commercial labs.

Confirmed Cases\*\*

3

Negative Results\*

**\*\* Confirmed Cases:** Positive test results for Whatcom County residents reported in the Washington Disease Reporting System as of 11:30 am.

**\*Negative Results:** Negative test results available for individuals that are known to the Whatcom County Health Department in the Washington Disease Reporting System as of 11:30am.

We simplified the way we report COVID-19 test results on March 13, 2020. [Read more about why we made that change.](#)

## Novel Coronavirus



### What is novel coronavirus?

Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a virus strain that has only spread in people since December 2019. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

### How does novel coronavirus spread?

Health experts are still learning the details about how this new coronavirus spreads. Other coronaviruses spread from an infected person to others through:

- The air by coughing and sneezing.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.
- In rare cases, contact with feces (poop).

### How severe is novel coronavirus?

Experts are still learning about the range of illness from novel coronavirus. Reported cases have ranged from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires hospitalization. So far, deaths have been reported mainly in older adults who had other health conditions.

### What are the symptoms?

People who have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after they are exposed to the virus:



# Concerns about COVID-19?

Do these things to prevent any kind of respiratory illness



**Wash your hands often.**



**Cover your coughs & sneezes.**



**Call ahead before visiting your doctor.**



**Stay home when sick.**

If you have severe symptoms that need medical attention, call the clinic before going in.



**Clean all "high-touch" surfaces daily.**

## If you are sick:

- If you have symptoms like cough, fever, or other respiratory problems, contact your regular doctor first. Do not go to the emergency room. Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs.
- If you have traveled, make sure to tell your doctor about it.
- Healthcare providers are working with local public health departments and CDC to determine who needs to be tested for COVID-19.

([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html))

## For more information:

The Washington State Department of Health has established a call center to address questions from the public. If you have questions about what is happening in Washington, how the virus is spread, and what to do if you have symptoms, please call 1-800-525-0127 and press #.  
([www.doh.wa.gov/emergencies/coronavirus](http://www.doh.wa.gov/emergencies/coronavirus))

Design & Illustration by YaddiMerrison



Whatcom County  
**HEALTH**  
Department  
Updated March 4, 2020



## Novel Coronavirus Fact Sheets

- [English](#)
- [Spanish](#)
- [Russian](#)
- Chinese ([Simplified](#))
- Chinese ([Traditional](#))
- [Vietnamese](#)
- [Punjabi](#)

## How Can I Be Prepared for a COVID-19 Outbreak?

- COVID-19 is a new respiratory virus. There are no treatments for it. Most people will recover on their own, but some people can develop pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.
- As new information emerges from across the globe, please remember that the risk of COVID-19 is not at all connected with race, ethnicity or nationality. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Seeking and sharing accurate information during a time of heightened concern is one of the best things we can do to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

### How can I prevent the spread of COVID-19?

- [Symptoms](#) of COVID-19 primarily include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. These symptoms appear 2 to 14 days after exposure.
- COVID-19 [spreads between people](#) who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) via coughs or sneezes. It may also spread by touching a surface or object with the virus on it.
- People are thought to be [most contagious](#) when they are the sickest, though some spread is possible before people show symptoms.
- Prevention starts with practicing good personal health habits: stay home when you're sick, cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, wash your hands often with soap and water, and clean frequently touched surfaces and objects.
- Getting plenty of rest, drinking fluids, eating healthy foods, and managing your stress may help you prevent getting COVID-19 and recover from it if you do.

### How do I plan ahead for COVID-19?

- Make an emergency plan of action with your household members, relatives, and friends. Visit [Emergency Preparedness and You](#) for more information.
- If the disease starts spreading in your area, health officials might recommend to close schools or cancel events and encourage people to work remotely to slow the spread of the disease.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 ([Washington Relay](#)) or email [civil.rights@doh.wa.gov](mailto:civil.rights@doh.wa.gov).

## How Can I Be Prepared for a COVID-19 Outbreak?

- [English](#)
- [Spanish](#)
- [Russian](#)
- [Ukrainian](#)
- [Chinese \(Simplified\)](#)
- [Chinese \(Traditional\)](#)
- [Vietnamese](#)

## Guidelines for Gatherings of Children and Youth While Schools are Closed

Adapted from Public Health Seattle & King County, March 15, 2020



School closures have been announced by the state, but parents still need to work and students still need safe and enriching spaces to spend their days. The COVID-19 pandemic calls on our whole community to think creatively about how to meet everyone's basic needs and maintain social connections while also blunting the spread of disease.

Here are some guidelines for hosting safe gatherings among children and parents outside of the school setting.

### First, a few general rules of thumb:

- If your child's sick, keep them home and separate them from others.
- Sick household members should separate from other people and animals and reach out to their healthcare provider with concerns. [Read more about what to do if you or your child has COVID-19-like symptoms \(fever, cough, shortness of breath\).](#)
- **Over 60? Have a chronic medical condition? Pregnant? Try to avoid gatherings and caring for other people's kids.**
- If you fall into one of these high-risk categories, put your own health first. Refrain from taking care of other people's children if possible. [Read more about precautions that people in high risk categories should take.](#)
- Social distancing helps slow down the spread of disease. Social distancing means staying 6 feet or at least an arm's length away from others.
- Respiratory hygiene habits go a long way. Teach your kids:
  - Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash their hands.
  - [Wash hands often](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
  - Avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Don't share food, water bottles, utensils, or cups.

### My neighbors and I want to share childcare responsibilities. What should we keep in mind?

- Limit the number of families involved. This can help reduce the spread of illness between multiple families in a community.
- Keep the group small. The smaller the group, the lower the risk. Aim to involve no more than 10 children in one indoor care setting.
- Consider asking participating families to take their children's temperature before gathering. Remind children and adults to stay home if they have a fever (above 100.4F), coughing, or shortness of breath, or are otherwise unwell.
- Frequently clean high-touch surfaces, like doorknobs, toys, and keyboards. Everyday cleaning products are effective against COVID-19. [Learn more here.](#)
- Practice social distancing measures whenever possible. Kids love to hug, tag, and tumble, which makes social distancing difficult. You can try to increase the distance between children:
  - Think small—only a few friends at most.
  - Play games that involve fewer opportunities for touching.
  - When kids do touch, remind them of proper respiratory hygiene habits.

## Guidelines for Gatherings of Children and Youth While Schools are Closed

- [English](#)

### Concerns about COVID-19 (PDF):

- [English](#)
- [Spanish](#)
- [Russian](#)
- [Punjabi](#)

# Compassion keeps our community strong.



## Have compassion for others.

- Viruses don't discriminate based on race, ethnicity, or cultural background. This kind of stigma makes any situation worse, not better!
- Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. Practice compassion towards others who may have a difficult time dealing with stress.



## Have compassion for people who are sick or social distancing.

- Reach out virtually to someone you care about who is at home sick or in self-quarantine.
- If you see someone in public coughing or sneezing, be kind. Offer a tissue, or kindly suggest they cough into their elbow.



## Have compassion for yourself.

- Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories.
- Ask for help if you feel overwhelmed or concerned that COVID-19 is affecting your ability to function. It's ok to reach out to your primary care provider, a counselor, or faith leader for support.



Whatcom County  
**HEALTH**  
Department



## Compassion Keeps our Community Strong

- [English](#)

## Additional Resources

- [Washington State Novel Coronavirus Outbreak 2020](#) (Washington State Department of Health)
- [2019 Novel Coronavirus](#) (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention)
  - What You Need to Know (PDF) - [English](#) | [Chinese](#) | [Spanish](#)
- [COVID-19 Outbreak](#) (World Health Organization)
- [COVID-19 Glossary](#) (PDF)

## Contact Us



Email for COVID19: [covid@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:covid@co.whatcom.wa.us)

Email for general info: [health@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:health@co.whatcom.wa.us)

Media Inquiries:

[health-PIO@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:health-PIO@co.whatcom.wa.us)

Phone: 360-778-6100

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