



Public Health  
Recommendations

FAQs

Healthcare Providers

Restaurants, Businesses &  
Community Organizations

Latest News & Updates

Media & Press

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

## Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

*Page updated: Tuesday, March 25, 2020 at 12:00 pm*

### I am looking for...

- [Public Health Recommendations](#)
- [Case Information](#)
- [School Closures](#)
- [Guidelines for Informal Gatherings of Children & Youth During School Closures](#)
- [What You Should Do if You Feel Sick](#)
- [What You Should Do if You Think You Were Exposed](#)
- [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

As of Monday, March 23, we are changing the way we report Whatcom County case information. With an increase in the number of confirmed cases, we are working to provide a breakdown of Whatcom County cases by sex and decade of age in the coming days.

The number of cases shown here were received through 11:59 pm yesterday.

Last updated: Tuesday, March 25, 2020 12:00 pm.


|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
|  | <b>Confirmed Cases**</b> |
|  | 66                       |
|  | <b>Negative Results*</b> |
|  | 336                      |
|  | <b>Deaths</b>            |
|  | 2                        |

**\*\* Confirmed Cases:** Positive test results for Whatcom County residents reported in the Washington Disease Reporting System as of 11:59 pm.

**\*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 11:59 pm. **Due to a technical difficulty with the Washington State Department of Health, the number of negative results has not been updated since 3/24/20.**

**Subscribe** and receive an email or text message notification when we update COVID-19 case results, along with other news items from WCHD. To sign up, use [this link to access the subscription sign up webpage](#), and select Health – Public Health News under the News Flash section.

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

**Novel Coronavirus** 

**Novel Coronavirus Fact Sheets** 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.

**English**

**How does novel coronavirus spread?**

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

- The air by coughing and sneezing.
- Contact with a person, 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).

**Chinese (Simplified)**




**How severe is novel coronavirus?**

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

**Punjabi**

**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:


Fever  Cough  Difficulty breathing 


**Concerns about COVID-19?**


Do these things to prevent any kind of respiratory illness


**Concerns about COVID-19 (PDF)**

**Wash your hands often.** 

**Cover your coughs & sneezes.** 

**Call ahead before visiting your doctor.** 

**Stay home when sick.** 


**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 4. ([www.doh.wa.gov/emergencies/coronavirus](http://www.doh.wa.gov/emergencies/coronavirus))

 Updated March 6, 2020

## 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 hard time.

## Compassion Keeps Our Community Strong



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

Reach out virtually to someone you care about who is 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.



## Recommendations for Handling Pre-Packed Food Safely



Here are a few steps to take to ensure food safety:

- Transfer food from packaging directly to your plate or to a clean container to eat later.
- Throw away all of the packaging, and clean any surfaces that it came into contact with.
- Wash your hands immediately after handling food packaging, and
- Wash all produce before you eat or prepare as normal. There is no need for additional washing or sanitizing.

Do not spray bleach or disinfectant on your food. Hand washing remains one of the single most important things you can do to protect yourself and others.

Note: there is no current evidence to support the transmission of COVID-19 associated with food or food packaging.

[whatcomcounty.us/covid](https://www.whatcomcounty.us/covid)

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

o [English](#)

o [Spanish](#)

o [Russian](#)  
How Can I Be Prepared for a COVID-19  
Outbreak?

o [Ukrainian](#)

o [Chinese \(Simplified\)](#)

o [Chinese \(Traditional\)](#)

o [Vietnamese](#)

How can I protect myself from 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 Plan](#) 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 1-800-835-0137. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 ([toll-free relay](#)) or email [usd.crisms@cdc.gov](mailto:usd.crisms@cdc.gov).

**Guidelines for Gatherings of Children and Youth While Schools are Closed**  
 Adapted from Public Health - Health & King County, March 15, 2020

Washington County **HEALTH** Department

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.

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

- Sick household members should separate from other people and animals and reach out to their healthcare providers for support. [Read more about symptoms that require a healthcare provider.](#)
- **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 symptoms that require a healthcare provider.](#)

- Social distancing helps slow down the spread of disease. Social distancing means staying 5 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.
  - Wash their hands 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 100.4°F), 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.

## 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:  
[WUC\\_JIC@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:WUC_JIC@co.whatcom.wa.us)

Phone: 360-778-6100



**E-Services**  
*View Available Services*



**Departments**  
*Find a Specific  
Department*



**Stay Informed**  
*Sign-Up for  
Notifications*



**Agendas & Minutes**  
*View Current  
Information*



**FAQs**  
*We're Here to Help*



[Website Feedback](#) | [Employee Login](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Copyright](#) | [Government Websites by CivicPlus®](#)

311 Grand Avenue | Bellingham, WA 98225 | Phone: 360-778-5000



 [Enable Google Translate](#)