

March 4, 2020

CATEGORY: News Release

RELEASE DATE: For Immediate Release

REGARDING: COVID-19 VIRUS

Northeast Tri County Health District (NETCHD) has been investigating a person under investigation (PUI) for the COVID-19 virus in relation to the Colville School District closure. While awaiting test results; this has provided Colville School District time to preform necessary precautions, including disinfection. This also provided adequate time for NETCHD to investigate and assess possible close contacts. Following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Washington State Department of Health (DOH) guidelines, it is acceptable for Colville School District to reopen.

NETCHD will continue to provide guidance to the Colville School District and will provide any support that we can. Please check the [Colville School District's website](http://www.colstd.org/) (<http://www.colstd.org/>) for updated guidance about schools and cancellations.

NETCHD has identified and contacted all close contacts of the PUI. All close contacts and the PUI are in isolation, awaiting test results.

For more than 80% of cases, COVID-19 is a mild illness that does not require hospital care. We cannot eliminate COVID-19 but we can limit its spread by washing hands with soap and water frequently, avoiding touching our face (mouth, nose, eyes), staying home when sick until the illness is resolved, covering coughs and sneezes with tissue and washing hands thereafter, and staying away from others who are ill.

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The health and safety of the people in the tri-county area remains our top priority. We need people to help prevent the spread of illness and to support the response to this situation by staying informed and sharing reliable information.

How Should People Prepare?

- Take many of the same steps to prepare for an outbreak as you would to prepare for other emergencies.
- Make an emergency plan of action with your household members, relatives, and friends.
- Know your workplace's sick leave policies and whether you can work remotely. We are encouraging employers who can allow telecommuting to do so or make plans to do so.
- Decide who will pick up and watch children if schools or child cares are closed, or if children get sick. Make sure schools and child cares have updated contact information and emergency contacts for your children.
- Have emergency supplies like nonperishable food, water, personal hygiene supplies, and medicine or other medical supplies in an accessible emergency kit – enough to last your household for at least 14 days. Include a list of emergency contacts as well as a list of medical conditions and medications for household members.
- If the disease spreads in your community, public events, school, or other gatherings may be canceled. Please respect these decisions. This is known as social distancing, which helps reduce the spread of illness.
- Set up a separate room in the household for someone who is sick and clean the room regularly. Clean, disposable facemasks may be useful for the individual who is sick, not for the well members of the household.
- Know your neighbors or friends in the area and be ready to support each other during an emergency. Check in on those who live alone or have underlying health conditions and may need extra support. If you live alone, talk to your friends and family members about who would be available to check in on you if you become sick.

The situation with coronavirus is rapidly evolving both inside and outside of the United States. Local, state and federal officials are monitoring, investigating, tracking down and isolating any suspected cases. For the latest information please visit: www.doh.wa.gov/coronavirus or www.netchd.org If people are concerned or want to learn more about COVID-19, there is a call center open. Call 1-800-525-0127 and press #.