

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information for KPTZ Listeners

How does it spread?

Right now, the virus has not been spreading widely in the United States, so there are no additional precautions recommended for the general public. Health experts are still learning the details. Currently, it is thought to spread:

- via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

What are the symptoms?

People who have been diagnosed with coronavirus have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus.

Symptoms of coronavirus are similar to flu or colds and may include:

- Runny nose
- Headache
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Fever
- A general feeling of being unwell

What can you do?

Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent coronavirus infections and there are no medications specifically approved for coronavirus. BUT, the steps you take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent coronavirus:

Wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with others.
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing. Cough or sneeze into your elbow. That's what kindergartners are taught to do.

What about wearing a mask when in public?

The DOH is not recommending that people wear masks when they are in public. There is currently no evidence that the virus is spreading in Washington so the health risk to the general public in Washington remains low.

Where can I get up to date information?

The Washington State Department of Health maintains a comprehensive website with information about the virus. Visit it at <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>. The page is updated daily with the following data:

- The number of confirmed (positive) 2019 coronavirus cases in Washington.
- The number of persons under investigation (PUI) in Washington who have tested negative.
- The number of PUIs with pending test results.
- The total number of PUIs tested.
- The number of people who are currently being monitored due to having close contact with a person who is confirmed to have 2019 coronavirus.

What if you have symptoms?

The Department of Health has established a call center to address questions from the public. If you have symptoms, the current advice from the State Department of Health is to first use that call center: 1-800-525-0127 and press #. They will ask you specific questions to determine the need for testing and/or self monitoring at home. They will advise you what you should do. Please don't just show up at your doctor's office or at the hospital because, in the very unlikely chance that you have the coronavirus it puts those important resources at risk. They need to know that you are coming so that they can make proper precautions to assure that the disease doesn't spread.

The above has been taken from the Washington State Department of Health website: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>, where much more information is available.

Local information is also available from the Jefferson County Dept of Public Health website: <https://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=424>.