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Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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COVID-19 Preparedness in Whitman County
Press Release

For Immediate Release:
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Whitman County Health Department Promotes Preparedness to Prevent
the Spread of Infectious Diseases

Pullman, WA (3/2/2020) – On January 21, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Washington State Department of Health announced the first case of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Washington State.

Since that time we have observed an increase in cases within Washington State and there has been confirmation of non-travel related cases. While the risk to the general population is still relatively low, Whitman County Public Health is working with county and regional partners to prepare for cases within our jurisdiction.

The symptoms of COVID-19 illness are runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, fever, and a general feeling of being unwell. It takes 2 to 14 days after a person gets the virus in their body to become ill. If you or someone you know has these symptoms, it is important that you call your healthcare provider before visiting their facility. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

While response agencies are working together to respond to this illness, there are several things that communities can do to reduce the spread of disease in our region.

1) **Stay home if you are sick**. To prevent the spread of illness through your workplace or public spaces, stay home if you have any symptoms of an illness.
2) **Maintain respiratory etiquette.** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and put your used tissue in a waste basket. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
3) **Wash your hands regularly.** Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer can also be an effective infection prevention tool if soap and water are not available.
4) **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.**

5) **Call ahead before visiting your doctor.** If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19.
6) **Make plans for childcare.** Planning alternative arrangements for your child or yourself in the case of a school or university dismissal or shutdown. Also, make plans for your elders and your pets, as needed.
7) **Practice social distancing.** COVID-19 spreads between people who are in close contact with on another (within about 6 feet) via coughs or sneezes.

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 #.

Resources

Washington State Department of Health - https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html