



Prevent • Promote • Protect

Office of Communication

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NEWS RELEASE

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El Paso County Public Health working with local partners to monitor coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

El Paso County, CO – With recent cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) reported in several countries, including the U.S., local health officials are watchful for potential cases. While COVID-19 is a serious global public health threat, the immediate risk in our community remains low. Although the worldwide number of cases of COVID-19 continues to rise with over 81,000 cases globally, there have been no confirmed cases in Colorado or El Paso County. El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) considers any new infectious disease a serious concern and has been diligently monitoring the situation for the past few months and preparing to take precautions should COVID-19 become more widespread.

Based on experiences from past disease outbreaks – including outbreaks of related coronaviruses – we know that identifying cases quickly and responding to them effectively is key to limiting and stopping the spread of disease. Rapid response helps to assure ill people receive the necessary care, and it lessens the chance of other people getting sick. Colorado and El Paso County have a strong disease surveillance system in place. Locally, EPCPH routinely plans, coordinates and prepares with the medical community, including clinic systems, local hospitals, private physician practices, the Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency Management, the Crisis Communication Network, and other partners to assure a coordinated and effective response.

Disease investigation is a core public health service. EPCPH's communicable disease program conducts 24/7 monitoring of more than 60 reportable diseases, including COVID-19, to help prevent the spread of disease in our community. In addition, EPCPH's emergency operations plans are regularly practiced and updated to prepare to respond to a wide range of potential hazards. EPCPH routinely works with local, state and federal partners to respond swiftly to emerging issues.

When a new virus like COVID-19 emerges on the public health scene, there are many questions, and it is understandable to be concerned. EPCPH encourages residents to rely on trusted, credible sources of information to prevent the spread of misinformation. With recent developments, it's logical for people to ask what they can do to protect themselves and their families. The same precautions recommended for avoiding colds and flu can help protect against COVID-19:

- Wash your hands frequently or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your inner elbow shirt sleeve
- Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms
- Stay home if you're sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth

Call (303) 389-1687 or 1-877-462-2911 (CO HELP) with questions about COVID-19. More information is available at www.elpasocountyhealth.org.