



Update on COVID-19 March 14, 2020

Keeping our community safe and informed is a priority for Two Rivers Public Health Department. We urge our community members to continue to seek facts from reliable sources such as Two Rivers Public Health Department. In times of uncertainty rumors run rampant, media reports and titles can be sensationalized-Two Rivers Public Health Department in partnership with: other local public health departments, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, strive to provide the most accurate and up to date information for our communities to make informed decisions. At this time it is appropriate for our communities to plan for and take appropriate precautions if the virus that causes COVID-19 is identified in our area. We will report positive cases of COVID-19 on the Two Rivers Public Health Department website and social media pages.

The risk from COVID-19 for individuals can be broken down into risk of exposure versus risk of serious illness and death.

Risk of exposure:

The immediate risk of being exposed to this virus is still low for most Americans, but as the outbreak expands, that risk will increase. Cases of COVID-19 and instances of community spread are being reported in a growing number of states.

- People in places where ongoing community spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 has been reported are at elevated risk of exposure, with the level of risk dependent on the location.
- Healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Close contacts of persons with COVID-19 also are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Travelers returning from affected international locations where community spread is occurring also are at elevated risk of exposure, with level of risk dependent on where they traveled.

Risk of Severe Illness:

Early information out of China, where COVID-19 first started, shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes:

- Older adults, with risk increasing by age.
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung disease

The CDC has developed guidance to help in the risk assessment and management of people with potential exposures to COVID-19 for clinicians and public health professionals:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/assess-manage-risk.html>

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What May Happen:

More cases of COVID-19 are likely to be identified in the United States in the coming days, including more instances of community spread. CDC expects that widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the United States will occur. In the coming months, most of the U.S. population will be exposed to this virus.

Widespread transmission of COVID-19 could translate into large numbers of people needing medical care at the same time. Schools, childcare centers, and workplaces, may experience more absenteeism. Mass gatherings may be sparsely attended or postponed. Public health and healthcare systems may become overloaded, with elevated rates of hospitalizations and deaths. Other critical infrastructure, such as law enforcement, emergency medical services, and sectors of the transportation industry may also be affected. Healthcare providers and hospitals may be overwhelmed. At this time, there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 and no medications approved to treat it. Nonpharmaceutical interventions will be the most important response strategy to try to delay the spread of the virus and reduce the impact of disease. Non pharmaceutical interventions include:

1. Staying home when you are sick.
2. Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
3. Washing hands with soap and water when available. Using hand sanitizer when washing hands is not available.
4. Social distancing: creating ways to increase distance between people in settings where people come into close contact with one another. Specific priority settings include schools, workplaces, events, meetings, and other places where people gather.
5. Closures: Temporarily closing child care centers, schools, places of worship, sporting events, concerts, festivals, conferences, and other settings where people gather.

Two Rivers Public Health Department has been monitoring this continually changing situation since early 2020 and continues to stay informed as this outbreak changes, in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Two Rivers Public Health Department has and will continue to take an active role in facilitating community conversations surrounding potential mitigation activities for COVID-19 transmission, understanding that some communities may choose to implement mitigation activities in advance of recommended activities based on current data.

Best regards,
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