



Umatilla County Public Health

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For Immediate Release: March 3, 2020

Press Release: Umatilla County Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Umatilla County Public Health (UCo Health) recognizes community concern surrounding COVID-19. We are working with multiple health agencies and community partners to disseminate accurate and up-to-date information.

Umatilla County has reported one presumptive positive case of COVID-19. We are waiting official confirmation from CDC, but we can report that this individual is recovering.

Three additional samples from Umatilla County residents who were in close contact with the presumptive case have been collected and sent for testing. The results of these samples are pending with the Washington State lab.

We are still in the middle of a severe cold and flu season and as such, every individual with flu-like symptoms does not need to be tested for COVID-19. Medical providers will screen individuals with respiratory symptoms to rule out other potential causes such as pneumonia or influenza. If all other possible causes of symptoms are ruled out, then providers will coordinate with public health entities at the local and state level to determine whether COVID-19 testing is appropriate.

If testing is appropriate for COVID-19, samples will be collected and sent to a state public health lab for initial testing. If testing is positive, the sample will be sent to CDC for confirmation of COVID-19.

The spread of COVID-19 requires close contact with an infected individual; therefore, it is important for Umatilla County residents to know that they are not at increased risk of exposure based on where you live, recreate or work.

UCo Health Director Joseph Fiumara states, "UCo Health is continuing to identify, contact and monitor at-risk individuals. We appreciate how understanding and receptive residents have been to the advice being given."

Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Umatilla County Public Health continue to recommend all people in Oregon take everyday precautions to prevent the spread of many respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19 and influenza:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often **with soap and water** for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains **at least 60% alcohol**.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Face masks are not recommended for individuals who are **not** sick.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are often touched.
- If you are sick, **please stay home until recovered**.
- Take care of your health overall. Staying current on your vaccinations, including flu vaccine, eating well and exercising all help your body stay resilient.
- Consult CDC's travel website for any travel advisories and steps to protect yourself if you plan to travel outside of the US.

We are asking our Umatilla County residents to please call 211 with your questions regarding COVID-19. If you are exhibiting symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, call your primary care provider **FIRST** to discuss the next steps. Do not go to urgent care, doctor's offices or the hospital with these symptoms without calling **FIRST**. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.



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We will continue to update our Umatilla County Public Health Facebook page as new information becomes available. Please refer to the Oregon Health Authority and CDC COVID-19 websites for additional information.

For media inquiries please e-mail: health@umatillacounty.net

Due to staffing levels at Umatilla County Public Health we ask that the phone lines be used for public questions. We will respond to your inquiries via e-mail or a returned phone call.