



Date: March 5, 2020

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Re: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

This is to update you on the status of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in San Joaquin County. To date, no one in San Joaquin County has tested positive for COVID-19. However, San Joaquin County Public Health Services (PHS) and its partners are planning and preparing for the potential spread of COVID-19 in the community. PHS has protocols in place in the event that we need to implement them, we are prepared to do so.

OVERVIEW:

- There is an ongoing outbreak of respiratory illness first identified in Wuhan, China, caused by a novel (new) coronavirus. It is a very fluid situation.
- Person-to-person spread is occurring, although it is unclear how easily the virus spreads between people.
- While Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers this a serious public health concern, based on current information, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 to the general public in the U. S. is considered low at this time.
- The majority of Individuals with confirmed COVID-19 infection have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath.
- As of March 4, 2020 CDC reported:
 - 80 confirmed and presumptive positive cases of COVID-19
 - 9 COVID-19 related deaths
 - 13 states reporting cases of COVID-19
- On March 4, 2020, California reported its first death related to COVID-19.
- There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infection.
- The situation is evolving. The CDC outbreak website is updated daily and is the best place to find the most up-to-date information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Stay informed

- **Since the coronavirus is a new virus and the situation is evolving rapidly, information for the public will also change accordingly. So that we are all on the same page with our messaging, Public Health Services recommends that the information you post and distribute be vetted through us.**
- Keep updated by regularly checking the following websites and their social media accounts for the latest information, tips and guidance:
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) webpage <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
 - California Department of Public Health (CDPH) webpage <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>
 - San Joaquin County Public Health Services (PHS) website www.sjcphs.org
- Help with rumor control. Be aware of how much will not be heard, not read, not understood,

misinterpreted and conclusions made that may create anxiety and the “worried well”. At this time, the risk to the general public is still low. PHS will inform the public accordingly on what steps need to be taken to protect themselves and their families throughout the stages of this outbreak (this is also on our website).

Promote and practice daily preventive care

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends taking the everyday preventive actions below to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses:

- Wash your hands frequently with water and soap for at least 20 seconds; especially after going to the bathroom; before eating and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- If water and soap are not readily available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer with 60%-95% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces at home, work and school.
- Practice healthy habits: get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.
- If you have not received your annual flu shot, please schedule one with your provider to help protect yourself against the flu.
- Follow CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask. CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

Remain calm:

- While the progression of COVID-19 is still evolving, the CDC is reporting that for the general public in the U.S., the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.
- If someone suspects being a case or exposed to COVID-19, the person should first call their healthcare provider for further assessment and guidance. The healthcare provider will follow the protocol to determine the next step such as testing, and reporting to PHS.
- To consult with a Public Health Nurse, call the SJC Public Health Services/Disease Control and Prevention Unit at 209-468-3828 or 209-468-3822 and ask to speak to a Public Health Nurse about Coronavirus. After hours, call 209-468-2215.

WHAT SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY IS DOING:

Since the start of this outbreak, we have taken a proactive approach to prepare for and carefully monitor potential cases of COVID-19 in San Joaquin County. The best way to prepare is to work to prevent an outbreak in the first place and this is what we are doing:

- Maintaining regular contact and following the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH);
- Conducting PHS planning meetings with our programs such as Emergency Preparedness, Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology, and Public Information and Communication to allow for enhanced response coordination;
- Working to ensure that our health care systems, first responders and schools have the guidance they need through presentations, phone consultations, meetings and posting information on our website at www.sjcphs.org;
- Maintaining communication and outreach with federal, state and local partners, including the County EMS and other Local and Regional entities;
- Providing symptom monitoring for residents returning from travel who are considered low to moderate risk;
- Distributing information and updates to health care professionals and educational settings; and,
- Reviewing and adapting current pandemic flu plans for COVID-19.

As this situation evolves, when we get new information we will update the community on a regular basis through news releases, updates and information sharing on our [Website](#), [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter account](#), as well as, email.