GENERAL COVID-19 INFORMATION

- ## WHAT IS COVID-19 AND HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

  Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

  The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses from the CDC website transmission page.

- ## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SELF-MONITOR

  According to the CDC, self-monitoring means people should monitor themselves for fever by taking their temperatures twice a day and remain alert for cough or difficulty breathing. If you feel feverish or develop measured fever, cough, or difficulty breathing during the self-monitoring period, you should self-isolate, limit contact with others, and seek advice by telephone from a healthcare provider.

  To download the CDC Check and Report Every Day (CARE) Booklet which helps you understand how to self-monitor your health and how to check your symptoms daily visit: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID-19_CAREKit_ENG.pdf

- ## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

  Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms can include:

  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath

  At this time, CDC believes that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of MERS coronaviruses.

- ## IS THERE A VACCINE OR TREATMENT FOR COVID-19?

  There is no specific vaccine or antiviral treatment to protect against COVID-19. People with mild COVID-19 symptoms may experience symptom relief from supportive care measures such as rest and over-the-counter medications for fever and cough. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often.

- **ARE THERE ANY CASES OF COVID-19 IN GREAT FALLS**

  To date, no cases of coronavirus have been recorded in Great Falls or Cascade County, according to the Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services https://dphhs.mt.gov/. The state agency continues to monitor the outbreak. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updates reports of confirmed cases several times a week. The risk for all Montanans remains low.

- **HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM THE VIRUS?**

  Stay educated on the disease by reading the CDC website. Take care of yourself by doing the following:

  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Stay home when you are sick.
  - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

- **SHOULD I WEAR A MASK?**

  If you are healthy, you only need to wear a face mask while you are in a room taking care of a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Those who are coughing or sneezing should also consider wearing a mask to protect others.

  Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. Before putting on a mask, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask. Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and do not re-use single-use masks. To remove the mask: remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed bin; and clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

- **HOW SHOULD I CLEAN AND DISINFECT COMMUNAL SPACES?**

  A summary of the CDC's guidelines follows:

  Wear disposable gloves (e.g. nitrile or latex) when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Disposable gloves are single-use and should be discarded after each cleaning. If disposable gloves are not available, and reusable gloves (e.g. dishwashing gloves) are used instead, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other purposes. Consult the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfection of products used. Wash hands with soap and water immediately after gloves are removed.

  If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

Focus on disinfecting other commonly touched surfaces such as keyboards/mouse, touchscreens, furniture (e.g. desk chair arms), coffee pot and refrigerator handles, etc.

For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70 percent alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water, or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water, or
- 1-part bleach with 9 parts water

A list of products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims, maintained by the American Chemistry Council Center for Biocide Chemistries (CBC), is available on the Novel Coronavirus Fighting Products list. Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against SARS-CoV2. based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.)

For porous surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:

- Launder items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely, or
- Use products with the EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims that are suitable for porous surfaces.

- **WHERE SHOULD I GO TO GET ACCURATE INFORMATION ON COVID-19?**

    - CDC: 2019 Novel Coronavirus
    - WHO: Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)
    - Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services https://dphhs.mt.gov/
- **SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT PETS OR ANIMALS AND COVID-19?**

For specific information about pets and COVID-19, visit the COVID-19 and Animals section of the CDC COVID-19 FAQ