

February 28, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We understand that the Novel Coronavirus, now known as COVID-19, is causing much anxiety in our community, country and the world. Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) is working to provide you with the most up to date information on this rapidly evolving situation. Following is a brief overview of the current situation. For more information and FAQ's, we recommend you visit www.maricopa.gov/coronavirus.

WHAT IS KNOWN

- The virus causing COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified and causes a respiratory illness ranging from a mild cold-like illness to severe pneumonia.
- Most (81%) of people diagnosed with COVID-19 in China had mild disease, including most children.
- Similar to influenza, the people who are most likely to have severe disease and complications from COVID-19 are older individuals (>60 years old) and those with other medical conditions like heart and lung disease or diabetes.
- There is no vaccine or treatment currently available for COVID-19 but the National Institutes of Health is evaluating treatments and developing a vaccine already.
- Currently, there is NO confirmed community spread of COVID-19 in Maricopa County, meaning the virus is not being spread from person-to-person. However, experts predict there will eventually be community spread. MCDPH is preparing for when/if this happens.

HOW THE VIRUS SPREADS

- COVID-19 is believed to spread primarily the same way the common cold or flu spreads—through respiratory droplets that are produced when someone coughs or sneezes.
- People who are most at risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 are those who have been in close contact (within about 6 feet) with someone who has the disease.
- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread of the virus might be possible before a person has symptoms; there have been reports of this with COVID-19, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

- Keep children home when they are sick.
 - Students (and parents/guardians) who are ill, especially with acute respiratory symptoms (not allergies or chronic conditions), should stay home.
- Teach your children to always cover their cough and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
- Remind them to wash their hands with soap and water (or use hand sanitizer) after they touch their face, use the restroom and before they eat.

- Tell children to avoid touching their mouth and nose since that is how germs get into the body.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects (everyday household disinfectants are fine)
 - Enhance cleaning of high touch surfaces like door knobs, toilet handles, and sink handles.
- Plan for when community spread occurs.
 - Ensure you have a plan to designate a caregiver, such as a family member or neighbor, for a sick child(ren) if you can't stay home.
 - Know your child's school plan to communicate with you when needed, such as robocalls, email or checking their website.

Because most people with COVID-19 have mild disease, the likelihood that MCDPH will recommend closing schools is very low, but not zero. In the highly unlikely chance that MCDPH has to shut down your child's school due to a COVID-19 outbreak, it is important for parents/guardians to have a plan for who could take care of your child.

MCDPH staff are working day and night to monitor this evolving situation and will continue to provide new information to the community as things change. Please contact your school leadership or healthcare provider should you have additional questions.

More information can be found at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus, www.maricopa.gov/coronavirus or at www.twitter.com/MaricopaHealth.

Sincerely,



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Director



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