COVID-19 and You

A new strain of coronavirus identified in China last December has led to a worldwide pandemic of a disease called COVID-19. Its symptoms include mild to severe respiratory illness. It can be fatal, especially among older people and people with existing health problems, like heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes.

How to Protect Your Health

Consider risks before traveling. The first cases of COVID-19 were seen in China. Travelers have since spread it to many other countries, including the United States.

To protect Americans, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued travel advisories recommending that Americans avoid nonessential travel to certain countries. This is a rapidly evolving situation. Travel advisories and the risk for Americans are likely to change. You can get up-to-date information about the virus on the CDC website at:


Do your part: Take common-sense precautions. Researchers are working to develop a vaccine to prevent COVID-19, but it will take time. In the meantime, you can use the same precautions you take to protect yourself from flu and other respiratory viruses. They’ll help protect you against the virus that causes COVID-19.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you’re sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing; then throw the tissue away.

Call ahead if you’re sick. If you have a fever, cough, or shortness of breath, call your medical provider. Your provider, working with public health experts, will determine whether you need to be tested for COVID-19.

Stay informed. During a public health emergency like this, rumors and misinformation are common. Use reliable sources to keep up with this rapidly changing situation.

Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index
Montana Department of Public Health: dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/coronavirusmt
Lewis and Clark Public Health: www.lccountymt.gov/covid-19