



Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health
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Panhandle Health District

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Defining Pandemic Words

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Panhandle Health District

This is a series about COVID-19 preparation and regional updates. Check the Press daily for new information, tips, and ways our health care professionals are working to keep our community safe.

There is a lot of verbiage going around that seems confusing or scary. Let's walk through what these words mean in this context:

Social Distancing: Staying away from group gatherings and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible. Staying home except for essential trips to the grocery store is the best way to practice social distancing.

Isolation or Self-Isolation: Isolation is defined as the separation of infected persons, or of persons suspected to be infected, from other persons to prevent transmission of the infectious agent.

Quarantine: In Idaho, quarantine is the restriction placed on the entrance to and exit from the place or premises where an infectious agent or hazardous material exists.

Quarantine applies to the closure of buildings/geographic areas, and isolation applies to persons.

In Idaho, we don't quarantine people, just geographic locations. In Idaho, we use isolation for a blanket term for anyone who is needing to stay home to protect our community.

High Risk: Individuals who are 65+, people with serious underlying medical conditions, including chronic lung disease, serious heart conditions, people in cancer treatment, people living with HIV, people with asthma, severely obese people and pregnant women are all at an elevated risk of severe illness due to COVID-19.

Testing: Laboratory testing is required to detect the presence of COVID-19. Collection of the sample that will be sent to the lab is done through a nasal swab, which can be ordered by your physician. The

testing criteria can change as rapidly as the COVID-19 situation; if you have a fever and cough, please contact your provider or call our hotline to discuss your symptoms and see if you meet testing criteria.

Monitoring: There are two different types of monitoring.

Self-monitoring- If you have been instructed by the Health Department to self-isolate you will be asked to take your temperatures twice a day and remain alert for cough or difficulty breathing. If you develop these symptoms, you will be asked to call the Panhandle health district monitoring number.

Active monitoring- The local health department has established regular communication with people potentially exposed to COVID-19 to assess for the presence of fever, cough or difficulty breathing. This communication happens at least once a day.

Mild symptoms: Mild symptoms may include fever, and cough like the flu.

Severe symptoms: May include fever, cough, shortness of breath, ongoing chest pain or pressure, new confusion, can't wake up, blueish lips or face. Please contact your provider if you are experiencing any of these symptoms.

Epidemic: An epidemic is an outbreak of a disease that spreads quickly and affects individuals at the same time.

Pandemic: A pandemic is a type of epidemic, but one with greater geographic range. A pandemic is a type of epidemic, but an epidemic is not a type of pandemic.

Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

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