



# Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Panhandle Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Preparation and Planning**

*Note: This was written by leaders at Panhandle Health District, Kootenai Health, and Kootenai County Emergency Operation Center as strong encouragement to the public to take action now.*

Although pandemics may be new territory for many in our community, health districts and health care facilities have been planning and preparing for these types of incidents for years. We are at a point where it will take all of us working together to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Each of us is responsible to follow the national guidelines to slow the spread and the order Governor Little issued on March 25, 2020. If you make the choice not to adhere to the guidance that has been put in place, the situation that is at a pandemic level in the US and worldwide could result in dire outcomes for many in our community. The threat is real, and we all need to take necessary precautions to protect ourselves and others.

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation's [COVID-19 projections](#) were cited in White House briefings and take into account how the pandemic is playing out in several countries around the world. They include the present trend line of deaths in the U.S. and the estimated impact of social distancing measures to predict when each state might reach peak daily deaths and hospital usage. **The number of people in our local community who will be infected and the number of people who will die is largely dependent on how well each of us who live, work, and shop in the Panhandle area follow the social distancing measures.** Our recommendations for every individual and family:

- Stay informed from reliable resources. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus because the virus mainly spreads from person to person. Some people may spread the virus without showing symptoms, so everyone should act as if they are possibly infected. Reputable sources include the CDC, WHO, and locally, the Panhandle Health District and CD'A Press.
- Limit close contact to family members that live within your household only. Find ways to connect by phone, video, or email. Write letters, send cards, and pictures. Stay connected, just not in person.

- Wash your hands often. Take hand sanitizer with you when you leave your home and clean your hands before and after you are in a public place. Avoid touching your face.
- Avoid close contact at all times by maintaining a physical distance of six feet between you and other people outside of your home. Employees and customers must also follow the six-foot rule in businesses that are still open.
- Stay home except for essential business, such as going to the pharmacy or getting groceries. Have one person from your household do these errands.

Finally, create a **Family COVID-19 Plan**. Families should prepare for the outbreak with a detailed plan communicated to everyone. Plan ways to care for those who might be at greater risk for serious complications. Talk with your neighbors, create an emergency contact list, and identify local aid organizations. CDC Guidance at [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html).

### **Knowledge is power**

Kootenai Health and the Panhandle Health District are actively working to share information about COVID-19 with our community. You can find the latest updates and ways to protect yourself at [cdc.gov/covid19](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19). If you have questions about COVID-19 or think you may have the virus, call the Panhandle Health District COVID-19 hotline at 1-877-415-5225.

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**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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