

CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT COVID-19 UPDATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 19, 2020

During the Memorial Weekend Holiday, you may wonder if it is safe to travel to visit family or friends. Taking time to plan safe travel during the COVID-19 pandemic can help you and your family stay healthy. Remember, there is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Below is helpful information to protect you and your family during the holiday weekend from Central District Health Department (CDHD).

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Remember that the virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, especially between people who are in close contact with one another (within 6 feet). Respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

CDHD recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in our district where there is significant community-based transmission. Use of a cloth face covering may help slow the spread of COVID-19. If you do not have a cloth mask, make a cloth face covering using a scarf or bandana. The cloth covering should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the sides of the face,
- be secured with ties or loops,
- include multiple layers of fabric,
- allow for breathing without restriction,
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to the shape.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, medical grade facemasks are reserved for healthcare workers and first responders.

For the general public, CDHD recommends wearing gloves when you are cleaning or caring for someone who is sick. In most other situations, like running errands, wearing gloves is not necessary. Instead, practice everyday preventive actions like keeping social distance (at least 6 feet) from others, washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (or using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol), and wearing a cloth face covering when you have to go out in public.

CDHD recommends you stay home as much as possible and practice social distancing. Traveling to visit friends and family increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19. It is possible for someone to have COVID-19 and spread it to others, even if they have no symptoms. Getting infected may be especially dangerous if you or your loved ones are at higher risk for severe complications from COVID-19. People at higher risk for complications need to take extra precautions. Although it can be hard to remain apart from loved ones during challenging or stressful times, try to connect with them in other ways, using video chats or phone

calls.

Going camping at a time when much of the United States is experiencing community spread of COVID-19 can pose a risk to you if you come in close contact with others or share public facilities at campsites or along the trails. Exposure may be especially unsafe if you are planning to be in remote areas, far away from medical care. Also be aware that many local, state, and national public parks have been temporarily closed due to COVID-19.

If a park, beach, or recreational facility is open for public use, visiting is okay as long as you practice social distancing and everyday steps such as, washing hands often and covering coughs and sneezes. Follow these actions when visiting a park, beach, or recreational facility:

- Stay at least six feet from others at all times. This might make some open areas, trails, and paths better to use. Do not go into a crowded area.
- Avoid gathering with others outside of your household.
- Wash 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.
- Bring hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to use if soap and water are not available.

Do not use playgrounds, including water playgrounds, located within local, state, or national parks. Using playgrounds might lead to the spread of COVID-19 because:

- They are often crowded and could easily exceed recommended guidance for gatherings.
- It can be challenging to keep surfaces clean and disinfected.
- The virus can spread when young children touch contaminated equipment and then touch their hands to their eyes, nose, or mouth.

Be watchful of yourself and your family for symptoms of COVID. They include:

- **Fever, cough, and shortness of breath but other symptoms may be present as well.** Trouble breathing is a more serious symptom that means you should get medical attention.
- **Follow care instructions from your healthcare provider and CDHD.** Your local health authorities may give instructions on checking your symptoms and reporting information.

We are nearing summer months when we like to travel and get together. This year will require a new level of thoughtful and careful planning throughout the summer months to avoid unnecessary illness. Stay informed and stay safe.