

# Local health officials announce new recommendations to reduce risk of spread of COVID-19

March 4, 2020

## Summary

**Local health officials announced new guidance to King County residents aimed at reducing their risk of exposure to COVID-19. While all residents can take steps now, people with underlying health conditions are urged to follow recommendations to avoid large gatherings of people.**

## Story

State and local officials announced today new recommendations to King County residents aimed at reducing their risk of exposure to COVID-19. We understand these actions will have a tremendous impact on the lives of people in our community. We are making these recommendations in consultation with CDC based on the best information we have currently to protect the public's health.

This is a critical moment in the growing outbreak of COVID-19 in King County and these measures can potentially impact the spread of the disease.

## Public Health is recommending, but not requiring, the following steps:

- People at higher risk of severe illness should stay home and away from large groups of people as much as possible, including public places with lots of people and large gatherings where there will be close contact with others. People at higher risk include:
  - People 60 and older
  - People with underlying health conditions including heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes
  - People who have weakened immune systems
  - People who are pregnant
- Workplaces should enact measures that allow people who can work from home to do so. Taking these measures can help reduce the number of workers who come into contact with COVID-19 and help minimize absenteeism due to illness
- If you can feasibly avoid bringing large groups of people together, consider postponing events and gatherings.

- **Public Health is not recommending closing schools at this time.** If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, Public Health will work with the school and the district to determine the best measures including potential closure of the school.
- All people should not go out when they are sick.
- Avoid visiting hospitals, long term care facilities, or nursing homes to the extent possible. If you need to go, limit your time there and keep six feet away from patients.

More detail on these measures will be available at [www.kingcounty.gov/covid](http://www.kingcounty.gov/covid)

## Case update:

COVID-19 test results have come back from the Washington State Public Health Laboratory confirming ten additional cases of COVID-19 in King County residents including one death. With these ten new results, the total number of cases in King County is 31. The total number of deaths is nine.

## The ten new cases are in:

- A female in her 60s, Life Care resident, hospitalized at EvergreenHealth
- A male in his 50s, associated with Life Care, not hospitalized
- A male in his 60s, Life Care resident, hospitalized at EvergreenHealth
- A female in her 70s, Life Care resident, hospitalized at EvergreenHealth
- A male in his 60s, Life Care resident, hospitalized at Evergreen
- A female in her 90s, Life Care resident, was hospitalized at Evergreen and died on 3/3/20
- A female in her 70s, Life Care resident, hospitalized at EvergreenHealth
- A male in his 30s, no known exposure, not hospitalized
- A female in her teens, associated with Life Care, not hospitalized
- A male in his 80s, a resident of Life Care, hospitalized at EvergreenHealth

## No other details about the 10 cases reported today are available currently.

21 other cases, already reported earlier by Public Health, include:

- A female in her 40s, worked at LifeCare, never hospitalized and is recovering at home
- A female in her 60s, family member of a confirmed case of COVID-19, not hospitalized
- A male in his 70s, a frequent visitor of LifeCare, hospitalization status unknown currently
- A male in his 20s, unknown exposure, hospitalized at Swedish Issaquah
- A male in his 20s, unknown exposure, hospitalized at Swedish Issaquah
- A female in her 80s, resident of LifeCare, never hospitalized, died on 2/26/20
- A male in his 50s, resident of LifeCare, hospitalized at Harborview Medical Center and died on 2/26/20

- A male in his 50s, hospitalized at Highline Hospital. No known exposures. He is in stable but critical condition. He had no underlying health conditions.
- A male in his 70s, a resident of LifeCare, hospitalized at EvergreenHealth in Kirkland. The man had underlying health conditions, and died 3/1/20
- A female in her 70s, a resident of LifeCare, hospitalized at EvergreenHealth in Kirkland. The woman had underlying health conditions, and died 3/1/20
- A female in her 80s, a resident of LifeCare, was hospitalized at EvergreenHealth. She is in critical condition.
- A female in her 80s, hospitalized at EvergreenHealth in Kirkland. This person died on 3/1/20.
- A female in her 90s, hospitalized at EvergreenHealth in Kirkland.
- A male in his 70s, hospitalized at EvergreenHealth in Kirkland. The man has underlying health conditions, and is in critical condition
- A male in his 70s was hospitalized at EvergreenHealth. He had underlying health conditions and died on 2/29/20.
- A man in his 60s, hospitalized at Valley Medical Center in Renton.
- A man in 60s, hospitalized at Virginia Mason Medical Center.
- A woman in her 50s, who had traveled to South Korea; recovering at home
- A woman in her 70s, who was a resident of LifeCare in Kirkland, hospitalized at EvergreenHealth and died on 3/2/20
- A woman in her 40s, employed by LifeCare, who is hospitalized at Overlake Medical Center
- A man in his 50s, who was hospitalized and died 2/28/20 at EvergreenHealth

## **What Public Health is doing:**

This is a massive undertaking and we have a talented, dedicated team digging in to learn everything we can to protect the health of our community. What we have seen with the level of community spread has raised the level of concern about the immediate threat of COVID-19, particularly for vulnerable populations such as people over 60, those with underlying health conditions or who are immune compromised.

## **King County Novel Coronavirus Call Center:**

- If you are in King County and believe you were exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, or if you're a healthcare provider with questions about COVID-19, contact our novel coronavirus call center: 206-477-3977.
- The call center will be open daily from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM PT.
- For general concerns and questions about COVID-19, please call the Washington State Novel Coronavirus Call Center at 800-525-0127.

## **When to seek medical evaluation and advice:**

- If you have symptoms like cough, fever, or other respiratory problems, call your healthcare provider. Do not go to the emergency room. Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs.
- If you are having a medical emergency, call 9-1-1.

## **In addition to the recommendations listed above, the public can help:**

1. **Do not go to the emergency room unless essential.** Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs. If you have symptoms like cough, fever, or other respiratory problems, contact your regular doctor first.
2. Stay home when sick.
3. Practice excellent personal hygiene habits, including handwashing, coughing into tissue or elbow, avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth.
4. Stay away from people who are ill, especially if you are 60 and older or have underlying health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, or a weakened immune system.
5. Stay informed. Information is changing frequently. Check and subscribe to Public Health's website ([www.kingcounty.gov/COVID](http://www.kingcounty.gov/COVID)) or blog ([www.publichealthinsider.com](http://www.publichealthinsider.com)).

Remember to take every day preventive action such as washing hands, and if you are sick stay home. During an outbreak with a new virus there is a lot of uncertainty. Our guidance and advice is subject to change as we learn more. We will continue to keep you updated.