



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 15, 2020

**Media Contact:** Melissa Morin, Communications Specialist  
**Phone:** (360) 594-2504  
**E-mail address:** [health-pio@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:health-pio@co.whatcom.wa.us); [mmorin@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:mmorin@co.whatcom.wa.us)

**Whatcom County Health Department Identifies Third Case of COVID-19**

**BELLINGHAM, WA** –The Whatcom County Health Department has identified a third confirmed case of [2019 novel coronavirus](#) (COVID-19) in Whatcom County. The case is a woman in her 20s.

Disease investigators from the Whatcom County Health Department are currently investigating this case further. Health department officials are working to identify and advise those people who have had close contact with the confirmed case. This includes:

- Talking with the confirmed case about where they were during their infectious period and who they may have had contact with for more than 10 minutes in a space of less than 6 feet.
- Reaching out directly to close contacts of the confirmed case to let them know of their potential exposure to a person with COVID-19, advising them about steps to prevent infecting others, and explaining what they should do to take care of themselves.

In their follow-up with close contacts, disease investigators determine if close contacts have any symptoms of COVID-19 and instruct them on precautions to take to avoid spreading illness.

- If a close contact has symptoms of COVID-19, they are instructed to isolate themselves at home for at least 7 days or 72 hours (3 days) after fever and other symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.
- If they do not have symptoms of COVID-19, they are told to monitor their health for fever, cough and shortness of breath during the 14 days after the last day they were in close contact with the sick person with COVID-19. They are instructed to not go to work or school, and to avoid public places for 14 days.

If during the investigation the Whatcom County Health Department identifies a public place where members of the public could have been exposed, public health officials notify the public of the location and time of the potential exposure.

“Investigating where and how people could have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 is an important part of our strategy in managing this outbreak,” said Dr. Greg Stern. “We investigate where and how people could have been exposed to confirmed cases in order to break the chain of transmission. However, COVID-19 is here in our community, and everything individuals and organizations do to prevent spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 will help.”

(more...)



# WHATCOM COUNTY Health Department





**Kathleen Roy, Assistant Director**  
**Greg Stern, M.D., Health Officer**

## For more information on novel coronavirus

This is an emerging outbreak with rapidly evolving information. Updates will be made as new information is available on the [DOH website](#) and [Whatcom County Health Department's website](#). These websites include information for individuals, community organizations, schools and childcare facilities. Websites are being updated as new information becomes available.

Questions for WCHD can also be emailed to [covid@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:covid@co.whatcom.wa.us)

###

509 Girard Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225-4005  
360.778.6000 | FAX 360.778.6001  
 WhatcomCountyHealth  
 WhatcomCoHealth



Whatcom County  
**HEALTH**  
Department

1500 North State Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225-4551  
360.778.6100 | FAX 360.778.6101  
[www.whatcomcounty.us/health](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/health)