



Custer County
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH-
10 Hermit Lane #5
Silver Cliff, CO 81252
(719) 276-3369

March 17, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Elisa Livengood, Custer County Public Health Director at publichealth@custercountygov.com or (719) 458-9211

Subject: Custer County Department of Public Health is reporting the first **assumed positive** case of COVID-19, or coronavirus, in Custer County.

The patient is a male in his 50s. The patient is working with public health officials in the ongoing investigation to identify people that may have had close exposure. The case is **assumed positive**, which means the patient has been tested for everything that mimics the symptoms of COVID-19. However, all those tests came back negative. Therefore, we are assuming this patient has COVID-19.

Local health and medical partners have acknowledged that the arrival of COVID-19 to Custer County was a matter of when versus if. As a result, they have been planning what a local response would look like as well as running through different scenarios.

There is currently no vaccine or treatment for COVID-19. Custer County Public Health and its partners will focus their response efforts on slowing the spread of the disease, which will require the community's assistance. Although more than 80% of people who have contracted COVID-19 have relatively mild illness, there are greater risks for complications among older adults, especially above the age of 60 years, as well as people with pre-existing health conditions.

Identification of the first case in Custer County is an important indicator. **Health officials are reminding residents and guests that the individual precautions they can take to limit their exposure are the same precautions that can help slow the spread of COVID-19 within the community.** These precautions will also help protect people in our community who may be at greatest risk for complications if they get infected.

Protect yourself:

- Wash your hands regularly, especially before eating or touching your mouth and nose.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, stay home.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

What to do if you're sick:

- Stay home if you develop a fever, cough or shortness of breath.
- Wear a mask or cover your cough and sneeze.
- Wash your hands frequently and don't share personal items (drinking glass or utensils) with others.

- Call your healthcare provider. Do not show up at a clinic, urgent care or the emergency department unannounced.
- Your doctor's office will assess your illness on the phone and provide information or guidance for you, household members, and other close contacts.
- Testing for COVID-19 is not a routine test. Your healthcare provider will assess your symptoms and risk for the disease based on guidance from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.
- Since many of the illnesses are mild, we expect most COVID-19 patients will be isolated in their own home to rest and recover. If possible, sleep in a bedroom and use a bathroom that is not used by other household members.
- There is no antiviral treatment for COVID-19. Getting rest and drinking plenty of fluids will likely be helpful for recovery. Only the most critically ill will be hospitalized.

Public Health officials also recommend residents prepare for an emergency that might require them to stay at home for several days, including having food supplies, water and medications.

Those with questions about COVID-19 can call the CO HELP Hotline at 1-877-462-2911. Updates or changes in guidance will be posted to <https://www.facebook.com/CusterCountyEmergencyManagement> and <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/2019-novel-coronavirus>
