



**PINAL COUNTY**

## ***Community Spread in School FAQ's***

### **OVERVIEW**

- Pinal County Department of Public Health and Maricopa County Public Health are working with American Leadership Academy after learning that one member of their school community has been identified as having a presumptive positive test for COVID-19.
- This person was a household contact of another presumptive positive case.
- Presumptive positive means that the test was positive at the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory but has not been confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- This individual did not have severe illness and has fully recovered from the virus.
- County Public Health officials have determined that closure of the school is not warranted at this time.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **What is COVID-19 or the 2019 Novel Coronavirus?**

- COVID-19 or 2019 Novel Coronavirus, is a new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.

#### **What is a coronavirus?**

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. There are several known coronaviruses that infect people and usually only cause mild respiratory disease, such as the common cold.

#### **What are the symptoms and complications that COVID-19 can cause?**

- Symptoms reported for patients with COVID-19 have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

#### **How does the virus spread?**

- COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how flu spreads.

## **Can someone who has COVID-19 spread the illness to others?**

- COVID-19 spreads similar to flu; therefore, if you are in close contact with someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 for an extended period of time, you are at an increased risk of getting sick. According to the CDC, close contact is being closer than 6 feet for more than 10 minutes with a sick individual.

## **Can people without symptoms still spread COVID-19?**

- Although there have been reports of people spreading COVID -19 before they become symptomatic, this is not typically how the disease is spread. Similar to flu, the people with the most symptoms are the most infectious.

## **What can I do to protect myself and protect the spread of disease?**

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands 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. Use an alcohol-based hand rub if there are no washing facilities available.
- Maintain at least 3 feet distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Make sure you and the people around you cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the tissue in the trash. If you don't have a tissue available, cough or sneeze into your bent elbow.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention. Call ahead to your healthcare provider, this will help the provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

## **Should I keep my child out of school to avoid risk of exposure to COVID-19**

- No. Public Health does not recommend keeping your child out of school if they are not feeling ill. COVID-19 is circulating in our community already, and currently the risk of being exposed at school is no greater than the risk of being in the community. Public Health officials expect more schools to identify cases and will be encouraging schools to manage COVID-19 similar to the way they manage a bad flu season.

In addition, it is important to consider that this outbreak may go on for several months. Therefore, unless the situation changes significantly, Public Health recommends carrying on with your life as much as possible while taking proper precautions like frequent hand washing and staying home when you are sick.

## **What is my risk and my family's risk of getting COVID-19?**

- Children 18 and under experience a mild form of this illness (similar to a cold) and in fact, over 80 percent of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 in China experienced a mild form of this virus. Those who have a more serious illness tend to be older adults and those with chronic health conditions.
- Healthy people or individuals without any respiratory symptoms can interact as usual with other members of the family or members of the public.

## **Individuals over 60 and with chronic health conditions living in the house**

- For people over age 60 and those with chronic medical conditions living in your home, the best way to keep them safe is to keep them away from anyone who is sick. This means keeping any sick people in a separate room and making sure sick people wear a mask when they are around others in the house.
- If it's not possible to separate sick people from well people, then sick people should wear a mask.

## **Pregnant Women living in the house**

- Although there is no evidence that pregnant women are at higher risk of getting COVID-19, it is recommended that pregnant women stay away from anyone who is ill. If that is not possible, they should wear a facemask around ill people.

## **If my child has been sick, when can they return to school?**

- Students may return to school 72 hours after all symptoms of an acute illness have resolved. This may include fever, cough, nausea, vomiting, etc. This does not refer to symptoms from allergies. If the student's health care provider advises a longer timeline for the return to school, please follow the health care provider's guidelines.

## **Can my family get tested?**

- Similar to flu or other infectious diseases, if an individual is not sick, they do not require testing. Currently, testing is being done by request of a healthcare provider for sick individuals.

## **What is the treatment?**

- There is currently no treatment or vaccine for COVID-19. This is very important because a positive test will not change an individual's clinical care. Similar to how we manage flu, sick individuals should stay home, drink fluids and take over the counter medications until they recover.

## **How can I clean my house if someone is sick in my home?**

- Cleaning with routine household cleaners is effective – cleaning should be focused on “high-touch” surfaces like doorknobs, counters, light switches, faucets and toilet handles, where germs can collect. Clean those areas at least once a day if someone in the home is ill.

## **How do I protect my pets from COVID-19?**

- There is no reason to think that any animals, including pets in the United States, might be a source of infection with this new coronavirus. To date, the CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19. At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals including pets can spread COVID-19. However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it's always a good idea to wash your hands after being around animals.