

HEALTH ADVISORY



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

REGION IV PUBLIC HEALTH

Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum
counties and Cowlitz Tribe

To: Physicians and other health care providers

Please distribute a copy of this information to each provider in your organization.

Questions regarding this information may be directed to the following Region IV health officers:

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH

Clark County Public Health, 564.397.8182

Skamania County Community Health, 509.427.3850

Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, 360.414.5599

Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, 360.795.6207

Steven Krager, MD, MPH

Clark County Public Health, 564.397.8182

Skamania County Community Health, 509.427.3850

Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, 360.414.5599

Wahkiakum County Health & Human Services, 360.795.6207

Alert categories:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.

COVID-19 cases in schools and childcare facilities; state updates return to school guidance for COVID-19 cases



Summary

As schools across the region transition to more in-person learning opportunities, there may be cases and exposures linked to area schools. Providers may receive questions and requests for testing from parents with children in affected schools.

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has updated its guidance for allowing children to return to school or child care and school staff to return to work following a positive COVID-19 symptom screening.

Public Health investigations of COVID-19 cases in schools

Local health departments will investigate all COVID-19 cases who have been in schools while potentially contagious and will work with local school districts to identify all close contacts. Close contacts to a COVID-19 case should quarantine at home for 14 days after their last exposure to the case, regardless of whether they have a negative SARS-CoV-2 test.

Health department staff will notify parents if their child has been identified as a close contact to a confirmed case. Schools may also notify parents if their child is a close contact of a case and/or provide a general notification to all parents, alerting them of the potential exposure in the school.

Providers should continue to follow Washington State Department of Health guidance for testing (<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/Interim-2019NovelCoronavirusQuicksheetProviders.pdf>). Providers should test all persons with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, including very mild symptoms, and test asymptomatic close contacts of cases.

Guidance update

The new DOH guidance for returning to school or child care following a positive symptom screening offers providers more flexibility. The guidance allows for providers to determine whether individuals with no known COVID-19 exposure who are experiencing symptoms should be tested for COVID-19 or if an alternative diagnosis can explain the symptoms. The duration of isolation depends on the number and type of symptoms, whether COVID-19 testing is performed, and alternative diagnoses made by the provider.

DOH created two versions of the guidance: one for counties with moderate to high COVID-19 activity (>25 cases per 100,000 over 14 days) and one for counties with low COVID-19 activity (<25 cases per 100,000 over 14 days).

To subscribe or unsubscribe from this listserv, email: Tippy.Hartford@clark.wa.gov.

The guidance is available on the DOH website:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/420-287-COVID-19SymptomEvalMgmtFlowChart.pdf>

Additional resources

Clark County Public Health has created a webpage listing all COVID-19 cases in public and private K-12 schools. The webpage contains school name, the date of the positive lab result, whether the case is a student or staff member, and whether the case was likely exposed in the school. The webpage will be updated every Thursday: <https://clark.wa.gov/public-health/covid-19-cases-schools>

Thank you for your partnership.

Local health jurisdiction	Phone	Fax
Clark County Public Health	564.397.8182	564.397.8080
Cowlitz County Health Department	360.414.5599	360.425.7531
Skamania County Community Health	509.427.3850	509.427.0188
Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services	360.795.6207	360.795.6143

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