

**Press Release from the Wyoming Department of Health
October 24, 2020
With Virus Escalating, Department Recommendations Critical**

With reported cases of COVID-19 recently escalating along with hospitalizations and confirmed coronavirus-related deaths, a Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) official says it is critical time for residents to follow the department's recommendations meant to slow and limit new cases of the virus.

"Our coronavirus cases are growing far too quickly and we are facing a deeply concerning situation across the state," said Dr. Alexia Harrist, state health officer and state epidemiologist with WDH. "It is up to all of us to help prevent Wyoming's problem from getting far worse."

Harrist said we all need to stay home and away from other people when sick unless seeking medical help. "This is important even you are just a little sick. If you have symptoms, don't automatically assume it's nothing. Plenty of people have done that and spread the virus among their families and friends and at their workplaces," she said.

"Keeping at least 6 feet of physical distance between ourselves and others who aren't members of your household whenever possible continues to be important," Harrist continued.

WDH recommends wearing cloth face coverings when people are in public settings or around other people who aren't members of their households and physical distancing is not reasonable or practical. "We know masks can work and help slow the spread of this virus. We are seeing that happen within classrooms, for example," Harrist said.

The department also encourages frequent and thorough hand washing to help with COVID-19 prevention as well as many other illnesses.

Harris said it is important for people who have possible COVID-19 symptoms to get tested. "Don't avoid testing because you don't want to get bad news. You need to know so you can avoid exposing others to the virus," she explained.

"We also need people to follow our public health orders and to follow the directives and advice from public health representatives," Harrist said. "If they reach out, answer the phone or return the calls. Answer their questions honestly. If you are asked to get tested, get tested. If you are told to isolate or quarantine, do it."

Harrist said it's not too late to improve the situation. "However, we won't be successful if people don't take simple steps to avoid spreading COVID-19 to someone who can't recover easily or recover at all. It could be a family member, a friend or someone you don't know. But doing what you can do to help is the right thing to do."

For more information on COVID-19 in Wyoming, including current data, recommendations and details about free in-home testing, visit <https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/infectious-disease-epidemiology-unit/disease/novel-coronavirus/>.