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TO: Grant Co. Media & Grant Co.  
Healthcare

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## **Washington State Department of Health Releases Updated Guidance for COVID-19 and Other Respiratory Illnesses.**

**GRANT COUNTY, WA** – In alignment with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [guidance](#) published earlier this month, the **Washington State Department of Health (DOH)** has released additional respiratory illness isolation and prevention guidance for the general public. The Grant County Health Officer, Dr. Alexander Brzezny, has endorsed this guidance and encourages Grant County residents to follow **all** recommended interventions.

**DOH Guidance Summary** - “While much of DOH’s new guidance is similar to recent updates announced by CDC, DOH’s new guidance offers additional recommendations on how to prevent spreading respiratory illnesses after someone becomes infected, as well as how to protect people with weakened immune systems and others at higher risk of severe illness”. (DOH, 2024)

DOH’s updated guidance considers best practices for:

- Testing and treatment
- What to do if exposed to a respiratory virus
- Isolation guidance for homeless shelters and corrections.

The new DOH guidance also simplifies COVID-19 isolation guidelines, which includes staying home and away from others until both of the following have been true for at least 24 hours:

- Your symptoms are getting better overall, and
- You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

When you go back to your normal activities, [wear a protective mask](#) and take added precautions over the next 5 days, such as taking [steps to improve air flow](#), practicing good [hand hygiene](#), [cleaning regularly](#), [physical distancing](#), and [testing](#) when you will be around other people indoors.

**Additional Ways to Protect High-Risk People from COVID-19** - If you are sick, DOH's guidance recommends staying away from people at high risk of COVID-19 until:

- 10 days have passed since your symptoms started,
- 10 days have passed since you tested positive (if you never developed symptoms), or
- You test negative for COVID-19 with an antigen test (such as an at-home test)

If you must be around someone at high risk of getting very sick during this time, the most protective step you can take is wearing a protective mask when around them.

**Stay Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccines** - Everyone aged 5 years and older should get a COVID-19 vaccine to help protect themselves and their loved ones. For those 65 years and older, an additional COVID-19 vaccine dose is now recommended for extra protection. If eligible, use <https://www.vaccines.gov/find-vaccines/> to schedule your updated COVID-19 vaccine at least 4 months following your last dose.

**Healthcare Settings - This new guidance DOES NOT apply to healthcare settings.** People who are staying or working in a healthcare facility should still follow the guidance in COVID-19 Infection Prevention in Healthcare Settings by WA DOH and any other guidance specific to their healthcare organization and setting. CDC continues to offer separate, specific guidance for healthcare settings ([COVID-19](#), [flu](#), and [general infection prevention and control](#)).

DOH's complete guidance can be [found here](#).

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