

Drinking Water and Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by a new, or “novel” coronavirus. COVID-19 is short for Coronavirus Disease 2019. Washington State is currently experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak.

COVID-19 has not been detected in drinking water. The Office of Drinking Water at the Washington State Department of Health and public water system operators work every day to protect public water supplies from bacteriological and viral contamination.

Drinking water regulations use a multi-barrier approach to ensure safe and reliable drinking water. They are intended to protect your water in three ways:

- **Source water protection:** Water utilities obtain their drinking water from the best quality and most protected sources available. This reduces or removes the risk of contamination from entering the water system in the first place.
- **Treatment:** When necessary, water utilities use filtration and/or disinfection with chlorine to treat your drinking water. Chlorine is very effective in killing coronaviruses. COVID-19 is a coronavirus and we believe chlorine will be effective in killing COVID-19 as well.
- **Monitoring:** Water utilities collect water samples at least monthly. If contamination is found, the regulations require utilities to notify the public and recommend steps they can take to ensure their safety.

Many smaller systems using groundwater wells do not have permanent disinfection. This doesn't mean that these sources are at risk, but they do lack the additional barrier disinfection provides. If your water system is considering installing permanent disinfection, please contact your regional engineer.

If you have questions about your water system's treatment or preparedness, please contact your water system.

If you own a private well

Private and private two-party groundwater wells may have natural protections from viral contamination. If you are worried about your well, we recommend sampling the well for *E.coli* bacteria. These bacteria are good indicators that your source may be at risk.

For more information, see:

- [Private Wells: Information for Owners](#)
- [Treating Drinking Water for Emergency Use](#)

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 ([Washington Relay](#)) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the [current COVID-19 situation in Washington](#), [Governor Inslee's proclamations](#), [symptoms](#), [how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

The risk of COVID-19 is not connected to race, ethnicity or nationality. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Share accurate information with others to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- [CDC Water Transmission and COVID-19](#)
- [Water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management or the COVID-19 virus](#) – World Health Organization
- [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Find Your Local Health Department or District](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)
- [Workplace and Employers](#)

Have more questions about COVID-19? Call our hotline: **1-800-525-0127**. For interpretative services, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. (Open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.) For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact your health care provider.