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## **COVID-19 Recommendations - March 10, 2020 Update**

We have scoured many sources for information and participated in many conference calls with national and regional experts on this topic. We hope you find these practical recommendations helpful. As we learn more, we will continue to send updates (about once a week) as long as there is new information worth sharing.

If you have questions, please email me at [michael@watech.org](mailto:michael@watech.org) and I will answer you promptly or direct you to the appropriate expert or resource.

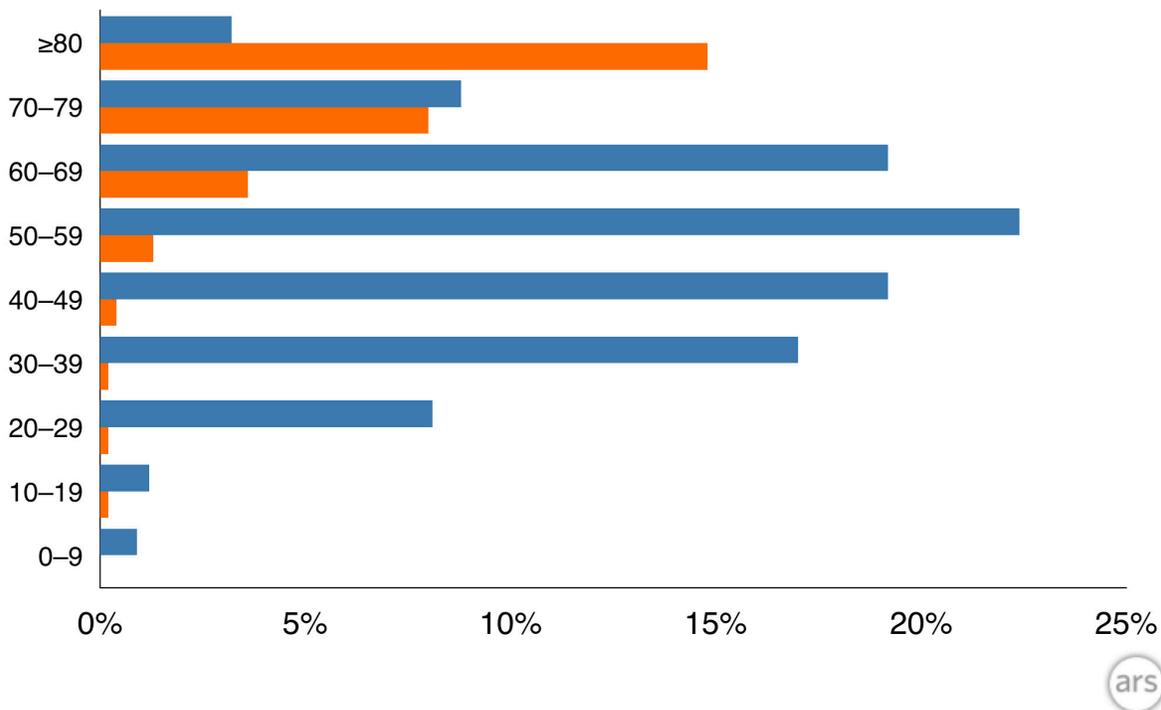
First, it is important to note that 81% of those infected with the virus encounter mild symptoms and recover fully in about two to three weeks. For most people, this illness will feel like a bad cold or flu. For those who suffer more serious symptoms, the mortality rate is skewed high due to limited testing and having only China as a relatively complete data set.

We really don't know the mortality rate, but the following chart is still useful for understanding who is most at risk.

# COVID-19 CASES AND DEATHS BY AGE

■ Cases  
■ Fatality rate

Percentage of cases by age and fatality rate within each age group  
Data from 44,672 cases in mainland China



Anyone 60 or older, and anyone with underlying health conditions such as diabetes, chronic heart disease, respiratory conditions, or illnesses that weaken the immune system, should restrict out of home activities until March 31, since you are more susceptible to complications from this virus.

Please be dubious of any claims or opinions posing as facts on social media.

- Rely on formal sources such as Washington’s [State Department of Health](#) or the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).
- We have also found a site ([Ars Technica](#)) with a comprehensive aggregation of many sources (as of today) on the science and data regarding this pandemic.

**Prevention.** There is no vaccine for COVID-19. There is no cure. Therefore, as a society, we are in a risk mitigation mode until March 31. The best strategy is prevention. Some common sense measures include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water - especially before eating - for at least 20 seconds. It takes about 20 seconds to sing the alphabet song.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid shaking hands.
- Keep social distance of at least 6 feet between you and others in any public setting.

- Stay home and avoid large gatherings if you're feeling ill, especially if you have a cough, fever, or shortness of breath. You are both more susceptible, if you don't already have the virus, and contagious to those around you.
- If you are over 60 and/or have an underlying health issue, you, too, should avoid large gatherings such as conferences, events, concerts, sports, etc. as you will be more susceptible to the virus.
- Clean shared touched surfaces and objects including keyboards and doorknobs using a household cleaning spray or wipe. Hand sanitizer should be at least 60% alcohol to be effective against the virus.
- A facemask should be only used by healthcare professionals working closely with those infected. A facemask can be useful for people infected with COVID-19 who must go out in public. Do not wear a facemask in public settings to protect yourself. This is not effective and wastes a precious resource for those who do need a facemask.

**Symptoms.** If you have been exposed to COVID-19, you will show symptoms within 2-14 days. If you show the symptoms listed below, please [call your primary health care provider](#). If you have:

- Sustained flu-like aches or fever for more than a few days.
- A persistent cough, or one that is progressively getting worse.
- Shortness of breath or tightness in the chest.

[Call your regular doctor for advice](#) or, if you cannot reach them, then call an urgent care center. [Do not go to the ER unless instructed](#). You may be instructed to self-quarantine either to avoid infecting others or to avoid contracting COVID-19.

**Testing.** As of March 10, there are still very limited testing kits and facilities reserved for the most acute cases among those in high risk categories.

At the moment people exposed to known COVID-19 cases or who have recently traveled to China, Italy, Korea, or Japan are considered high risk. Your doctor can help you determine if testing is warranted and if so, help you find the means best suited to your situation. For most of us with the symptoms, we will not get testing for weeks if at all.

**Travel.** For the time being, there are no mandatory travel restrictions that apply to you. Our recommendation is to avoid planes, trains, public transit, boat cruises, etc. If you must travel before March 31, use social distancing of 6 feet wherever possible, while among the public, wipe down all surfaces before touching them, and while in continuous close proximity to others you might consider wearing a face mask applied securely.

**Events.** For the time being, there are no mandatory event restrictions. The Governor's office is expected to issue an advisory in the next day or so. Our recommendation is to postpone all events with more than 100 people in attendance until at least after March 31. If you do host an event, you should:

- Make clear to your attendees that people over 60 and people with underlying health conditions are at risk.
- You must notify attendees of where handwashing stations are located and urge the social distancing rule of 6 feet during the event.
- You must perform a thorough cleaning of the facility to ensure the virus is not spread after the event.

**Workplace.** This is similar to events. There are no current mandatory restrictions. Our recommendation is that you allow employees to work from home whenever possible until March 31. If your employees do come to work, please encourage them to follow the prevention items listed above while at work.

**Schools.** For the time being, most schools in WA will remain open. Some schools will close for cleaning if COVID-19 is detected or suspected. Higher education institutions are moving to online classes if COVID-19 is detected or suspected. This means that working parents will have new childcare challenges likely requiring more telecommuting and/or work schedule adjustments. We recommend you provide ample flexibility for your employees to help maintain morale, reduce anxiety, and improve productivity during this period of uncertainty.

**Business support.** The Governor has approved some new rules for employees to apply for financial aid through ESD. See [here](#) for details, but in summary:

- Employees will be able to receive unemployment benefits and employers will get relief from benefit charges if an employer needs to curtail or shut down operations temporarily because a worker becomes sick and other workers need to be isolated or quarantined as a result of COVID-19.
- An employee that follows guidance issued by a medical or public health official to isolate or quarantine themselves as a result of exposure to COVID-19, and is not receiving paid sick leave from their employer, may be eligible to receive unemployment benefits.
- If a worker falls seriously ill and is forced to quit, they may qualify for Paid Family Medical Leave while ill under the existing program. Once recovered and available for work, they may apply for unemployment benefits.
- The full-time requirement for Standby Unemployment Insurance is removed to include part time/less than full-time workers who are isolated.
- Any employers who have a COVID-19 impact on their business may delay Paid Family Medical Leave required payments, upon request.

WA Department of Labor & Industries also has new rules allowing for employers who have a COVID-19 impact on their business to delay Workers Compensation required payments, upon request. Other state agencies, the Governor's office, and the State Legislature are considering other funding mechanisms and actions. We will share facts and details once they are confirmed.

As we learn more, we will confirm facts, synthesize sources, and get you update recommendations. Meanwhile, if I can help in any way, just ask.

Michael Schutzler  
CEO, WTIA

WTIA  
[1721 8th Ave N](#)  
Seattle, WA 98109



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