3/11/2020

Greetings,

As many of you are aware, the coronavirus has entered South Dakota. Below is some information from the South Dakota Department of Health about the virus and preventative measures you and your family can put in action.

Background: Many parts across the world are experiencing an expanding outbreak of respiratory illness (COVID-19) caused by a novel coronavirus (SARS CoV-2). This virus is spreading from person to person and the number of cases detected in the United States and many other countries is growing.

As new information emerges, please remind your community that the risk of COVID-19 is not at all connected with race, ethnicity or nationality. Stigma will not help to fight the illness. Sharing accurate information during a time of heightened concern is one of the best things we can do to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

What is a coronavirus? Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that usually cause mild respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. Some coronaviruses have caused more severe illness, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new coronavirus that was not identified in humans before December 2019.

What are common symptoms of COVID-19? Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. It takes 2 to 14 days after a person gets the virus in their body to become ill. COVID-19 is a new disease, and we are learning more each day about its symptoms and how it is spread.

How does the virus spread? Most often, it is spread from person-to-person via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how flu and other respiratory pathogens spread. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

It's currently unclear if a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or their eyes. Often, with most respiratory viruses, people are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).

What can I do to prevent COVID-19 in my school? You can help students and staff reduce their risk for getting and spreading viral respiratory infections, including the flu and the common cold, by encouraging them to take simple steps which will also prevent COVID-19. These include:

• Staying home when sick.
• Frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after they blow their nose. Help young children do the same. If hands are visibly dirty, use soap and water to clean hands.
 • If soap and water are not readily available, using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
• Advising persons to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
• Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
• Covering coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in the trash and cleaning hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer (if soap and water are not readily available).

Should you need more information about the virus, please check the South Dakota Department of Health (DOH) website at covid.sd.gov for the most current information and guidance.

Thank you for your consideration and efforts to keep all of us at the Frederick Area School safe and well!