



CITY OF UNALASKA

43 Raven Way • P. O. Box 610
Unalaska, Alaska 99685

www.ci.unalaska.ak.us/citymanager/page/coronavirus-covid-19

CONTACT:

Marjie Veeder, City Clerk
Public Information Officer
Tel 907.581.1251

Email: mveeder@ci.unalaska.ak.us

NEWS RELEASE

March 19, 2020, 2:00 pm, News Release no. 9

Coronavirus COVID-19

LOCAL RISK FACTOR: Medium

CITY OF UNALASKA COVID-19 CASE COUNT:

Patients tested at IFHS	3
Confirmed Negative Tests	1
Pending Test Results	2

STATE OF ALASKA COVID-19 CASE COUNT:

Total Confirmed Cases in State of Alaska since 01/01/2020	9
Total Negative Tests since 01/01/2020	513

All nine confirmed cases are travel-related, meaning the exposure or source was outside the State of Alaska.

CITY PARKS: Parents are strongly encouraged to comply with CDC guidelines discouraging children and teens from gathering in large groups in parks and other public places while school is dismissed in order to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Attached is a message from the DHSS Program "Get out and Play Every Day" with helpful guidelines and recommendations for families.

CITY COUNCIL RATIFICATION OF EMERGENCY DECLARATION: On March 18 the Unalaska City Council ratified and extended the local declaration of emergency to remain in effect for so long as the state declaration of emergency remains in effect.

CITY FACILITY CLOSURES:

Unalaska City Schools	Unalaska Public Library	Aquatic Center
Community Center (PCR)	Dept. of Motor Vehicles (DMV)	

CRISIS LINES: If you are distressed, want to talk about your troubles or needs you may have, help is available!

Please call:

- USAFV 24-Hour Crisis Line (907) 581-1500
- USAFV Toll-Free 24-Hour Crisis Line (800) 478-7238
- APIA Behavioral Health Crisis Line (907) 359-2743

HOUSEHOLD CLEANING GUIDELINES: Consult the CDC website for household cleaning guidelines at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html>

#####



Get out and Play. Every day.

It's important for Alaska kids to get out and play while social distancing, but follow these recommendations

MARCH 19, 2020 — Schools across Alaska are closed through the end of March to promote social distancing and prevent the spread of coronavirus. That means staying at least 6 feet away from people other than family members, or about a ski's length away.

The school closure and recommendation for social distancing leave families trying to make sense of a big question: Can their children still play outside the home, and if so, how do they do it safely and minimize the chances of getting and spreading illness?

Louisa Castrodale, epidemiologist with Alaska's Division of Public Health, answers this and other questions. The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services is also updating its coronavirus information every day. Please stay informed by visiting coronavirus.alaska.gov.

Can kids get outside and play during social distancing, or do they have to play only inside?

Children can definitely get outside and play right now. Activity is so important for kids' physical health, but also for their mental health. The national physical activity recommendations say physical activity can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, which may be showing up during this challenging time.

The days are getting longer in Alaska and some communities have a lot of remaining snow for outdoor activities. Children can run around, kick a ball back and forth, hike, bike, ice skate, sled, cross country ski and do other activities as long as the weather and conditions allow. The most important recommendation is to give each other space while doing these activities. Spread yourselves out and maintain 6 feet of distance from people other than family members.

Kids and adults should avoid activities that involve contact with non-family members, like tag, football and hockey.

"Contact sports are best to avoid right now," Castrodale said.

Do kids need to play only with their siblings and family, or can they play with friends?

Kids can play with friends outside their family circle, but Castrodale said to keep the group small and consistent.

"The fewer people you have contact with, the better," she said. This line of reasoning follows the national recommendation of canceling mass gatherings and even group interactions of more than 10 people.

If families choose to have play dates, it is best to have play dates with the same family or small group of friends during this period of social distancing. This means choosing another family or a couple of friends to play with during this time, and then only playing and socializing with them. That doesn't mean, however, that one day your family plays with one small group of people, the next day they socialize with another small group, and the next day a different group entirely. Limiting interactions to these small groups can prevent the spread of illness. It's important for parents to make sure that no one in the group shows symptoms of coronavirus or other illnesses.

Talk to your kids about the importance of giving others space right now. Kids love to touch and hug others, so remind them not to do that with people outside their family during social distancing. When kids do touch each other, remind them to thoroughly wash their hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and to avoid touching their faces.

Families should take their children's temperatures and ask how they are feeling before socializing with others. Children and adults should stay home and away from others when they have a fever (100.4°F or higher), are coughing or are short of breath. These are some of the symptoms of coronavirus, also called COVID-19. Families also should follow guidelines about limiting contact with others who have recently traveled outside Alaska. These are found under "COVID-19 Health Alerts and Mandates" on coronavirus.alaska.gov.

Does it matter if these play dates are inside or outside?

Play dates inside a house could be OK, Castrodale said, but the recommendations for small groups and limited interaction still apply.

“I think the bottom line is that play dates where children are not in close proximity are better, and that might be easier outside,” Castrodale said.

“It’s really maintaining distance from one another that’s most important.”

Should children limit playing or socializing with grandparents or other adults over age 60?

Castrodale said it’s wonderful to support children’s relationships with grandparents and older adults, but physical interaction between them right now should be limited or avoided. People 60 and older and those with chronic medical conditions, like heart disease and diabetes, face the highest chances for serious health problems related to coronavirus.

“Part of this idea of social distancing is to protect our most vulnerable folks,” Castrodale said.

So while it’s sad to limit face-to-face interactions with older loved ones, that might be the best thing for their health right now. Instead, use FaceTime or Skype to keep your children and grandparents in contact.

“Right now, the best way to love grandma is to send her a nice note, rather than to see her in person,” Castrodale said.

What can your kids do before, during and after playing to prevent the spread of illness?

Kids and parents should do several things to prevent getting and spreading illness:

- Wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. That’s the amount of time it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song from start to finish twice. If water is not available, use a hand sanitizer that’s made with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover their own mouths and nose when coughing or sneezing, either through coughing into their elbows or ideally using a tissue. Then, immediately throw the tissue away and wash their hands.
- Avoid touching their faces, especially with unwashed hands. That includes rubbing eyes or touching noses or mouths.
- Don’t share cups, water bottles, utensils or food.
- Parents can frequently clean and disinfect surfaces that kids touch a lot, like doorknobs and toys. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published [recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting homes](#) with suspected or confirmed coronavirus infections. This webpage includes a section for routine cleaning of households that states families can use household cleaners and EPA-registered disinfectants on frequently touched surfaces.

What should you do if your child becomes sick?

Castrodale said the most important thing to remember is to keep sick children inside the home and away from others, including siblings.

“Anyone who is sick needs to be isolated,” she said. Of course, a parent will need to provide care for that child, but siblings and others should be separated as much as possible. If parents believe the child needs medical care, they should call their provider before going in to the clinic, she said.

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services is updating its coronavirus information every day. Please stay informed by visiting coronavirus.alaska.gov.

Read the entire blog on the [Play Every Day website](#).

Play Every Day is a campaign with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services to help Alaska children grow up at a healthy weight and encourage families to be physically active and choose healthy drinks. For more information, visit www.playeveryday.alaska.gov.