

HOT TOPIC #32: October 28, 2020

COVID-19 updates from San Juan County around subjects on the minds of islanders

Guidance on Symptoms of COVID and When to Stay Home from Work, School, and other Public Spaces.

For most of us, one of the challenges of the COVID response has been trying to pull out useful details from the steady stream of complicated and ever-changing information.

This Hot Topic will attempt to simplify the complex, but please know that if you have a concern, you can always contact your healthcare provider for questions about your symptoms, or the San Juan County COVID Hotline for more general inquiries at 360-370-7500 and we'll help clarify.

Remember: If you think you are having a medical emergency or you are not sure CALL 911.

As we head into winter, sore throats, stuffy noses, and fevers become far more common. This year, the risk of COVID heightens our awareness and concern.

We've always been asked to stay home when sick, but what does that mean? If you have seasonal allergies, do you stay home? Do you stay home if you're recovering from a cold and fighting a lingering sore throat? How long do you wait after being sick to return to work? There aren't too many certainties these days, but below is some commonsense guidance.

First off, if you were in close contact with someone with a confirmed positive COVID test result and have **NOT** been contacted by public health authorities, please call 360-370-7500.

Secondly, there are two categories of COVID symptoms:

CLASS A: More Worrisome	CLASS B: Less Worrisome
Fever (100.4F or higher)	Fatigue
Cough	Headache
Loss of sense of taste or smell	Muscle or body aches
Shortness of breath	Sore throat
	Congestion or runny nose
	Nausea or vomiting
	Diarrhea

With that as a starting point, here are some basic guidelines:

SYMPTOMS: If you have **any Class A symptoms** or **2 or more Class B symptoms:** contact your healthcare provider. A COVID test is strongly recommended.

-If you contact your health care provider and either don't receive a COVID test, or receive a COVID test that is **NEGATIVE**, you should stay at home until:

- 24 hours after your fever (if present) has resolved (without help of medications), **AND**

- Your symptoms have improved, **OR**
- Your health care provider has cleared you to return to work, school, etc.

-If you contact your healthcare provider and received a POSITIVE COVID test, you should stay home until:

- It has been 10 days since your symptoms began, AND
- 24 hours after your fever has resolved (without help of medications), AND
- Your symptoms have improved, OR
- Your health care provider has cleared you to return to work, school, etc.

And if you only have one Class B symptom, do the smart thing and stay home until you're feeling healthy. If the symptom doesn't resolve, then contact your healthcare provider.

From a public health standpoint, there has always been caution about the start of winter, reopening of schools, holiday travel, and our move indoors for many activities and gatherings. We are entering an especially vulnerable time, especially with cases rising across the United States and Washington.

We can't eliminate all risk, but we can continue to be thoughtful, careful, and respectful of our communities and our friends and neighbors. That continued diligence will help to ensure continued success.