



Southeastern Idaho Public Health

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Contact Tracing is Key

Contact tracing is an important part of slowing the spread of COVID-19. In general, contact tracing involves identifying people who have an infectious disease and people who they have come in contact with, and working with them to interrupt the spread of disease. When used with other public health measures like widespread testing and physical distancing, contact tracing is a key strategy for preventing further spread of COVID-19. “Testing and tracing helps us identify who has the disease and who may be at risk of infection – knowledge that is incredibly powerful as we look to remain open,” said Maggie Mann, Southeastern Idaho Public Health (SIPH) District Director.

Contact tracing for COVID-19 typically involves interviewing people with COVID-19 to identify everyone they had close contact with (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer) beginning three days before they became ill and were potentially infectious. SIPH will then reach out to these individuals, informing them that they have come in contact with someone with COVID-19. The name of the patient will not be revealed to those that may have been exposed, even if they ask. Additionally, contact tracers refer contacts for testing as appropriate, monitor contacts for signs and symptoms as well as connect contacts with services they might need during a 14-day self-quarantine period.

“SIPH currently has epidemiologists who perform contact tracing, and we are scaling up by hiring and training additional staff to help stop the transmission of COVID-19,” said Mann. “Contact tracing is a core disease control activity that we have been using for decades with cases like HIV and TB. It is a proven effective tool to help stop the spread of infectious disease.”

For southeast Idaho specific information about the novel coronavirus, please visit <https://siphidaho.org/coronavirus.php>. For Idaho-specific information about the novel coronavirus, please visit <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>. Join us Monday-Friday at 11 am for Facebook Live at <https://facebook.com/siphidaho>.

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