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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Greenlee County, Arizona**

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**NEWS RELEASE**  
**COVID-19 (emerging coronavirus disease) Preparedness**

The emergence and spread of a new strain of coronavirus (a group of viruses that are typically a cause of the common cold) has dominated news recently. The disease caused by this new form of the virus is called COVID-19 and is now present in multiple parts of the United States. The Arizona Department of Health Services notes there is a higher likelihood of further spread in the U.S. Currently a few cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Arizona and other presumptive cases are in the process of confirmation.

The worldwide experience of COVID-19 has demonstrated that persons infected develop mild or moderate symptoms about 80% of the time and generally don't need medical care. They can let the illness run its course at home. Older adults and persons of any age with medical conditions such as heart or lung problems and diabetes are more at risk to become sicker, thus requiring medical care and possible hospitalization.

People worry about the possibility of dying from COVID-19. So far it appears that 1 to as many as 4 persons out of every 100 who catch the disease die. In comparison, deaths from influenza (flu) occur in 1 to 2 per 1,000 persons affected. The deaths occur mostly in older people and other persons with chronic medical conditions. However, this mortality rate is likely to change as more data is gathered and as care for ill persons improves.

The majority of viral illnesses have no effective medications, and this is also the case for COVID-19 disease. The most effective care for hospitalized patients involves supplementing oxygen and providing excellent nursing and respiratory care.

When ill with COVID-19, most people do not experience a sore throat or runny nose. The most common symptoms are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may occur from 2 to 14 days after exposure. The virus is spread by respiratory droplets occurring when an ill person coughs or sneezes. The droplets are heavy and fall from the air within 6 feet. This is the basis for the recommendation to stay 6 feet away from an ill individual. Medical personnel are

typically close to patients and should wear masks and other personal protective equipment. Masks do little to shield the general public who remain outside the recommended distance but can help protect persons with symptoms from spreading the disease. However, the respiratory droplets fall on home and work surfaces, door handles, shopping carts, keyboards, and other surfaces. The most common way people become ill is by touching these surfaces and then touching their face where the virus may gain entry into their bodies.

Delaying onset in the community and reducing the number of persons contracting COVID-19 is a primary goal. In addition to the obvious benefit of reducing the total number of ill people, fewer health care workers become sick and fewer health care facilities become overrun. To help prevent the spread of the disease, the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recommends the following:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
  - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory disease, including COVID-19;
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever, cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider for advice. (They may have special procedures for you to follow if you are seen in order to reduce exposure to others).

Other recommendations if you are sick include:

- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Avoid public areas - do not go to work, school, etc.
- Stay away from others (stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom if possible).
- Call ahead when you have a medical appointment.
- Wear a facemask when other people in your home need to be around you.

More detailed guidance can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>

Public health personnel have been collaborating with area health care providers, school personnel, employers, and other groups to develop a coordinated and prospective response to the COVID-19 situation.

Adherence to these and other guidelines and measures as they are released can go a long way to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities, by preventing illness, delaying its spread, preserving the capacity of the health care system to continue providing care and reducing disruption of community services.

Additional information may be obtained at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>

<https://www.azdhs.gov>

<https://www.co.greenlee.az.us>

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