March 13, 2020

**Fellow Youth Ranch Employees:**

This is our weekly message concerning the coronavirus and actions being taken by IYR to protect ourselves and our families, our clients and customers, and our communities. As before, ***we ask all supervisors to post this message and to personally share it with any of their staff who do not have a personal work email.***

**IYR Specific Information**

* **Effective immediately: IYR is suspending all non-essential business travel on public transportation** (airplanes, trains, busses, etc.). This restriction remains in effect until further notice. Whether proposed business travel is essential will be determined by the traveling employee’s supervisor in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). We will continue to monitor the situation and adjust this restriction as needed.
* Guidance on cleaning and sanitizing our work areas has been distributed, and appropriate supplies (disinfectant, disposable gloves, etc.) will be sent to all locations as they become available.
* Hand sanitizer is being distributed to all locations. Remember that hand sanitizer is intended for use when soap and water are not available.
* The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) has also been reviewing our current policies on sick leave and PTO and we will be sending out next week guidance on how we will handle employee absences due to the coronavirus.
* ELT continues to develop business plans specific to each IYR work section.

**Questions**

* **Should we be wearing gloves?** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has not identified gloves (disposable or otherwise) as a protective measure against coronavirus. Both the CDC and the World Health Organization (WHO) continue to emphasize that the single best individual protection is washing your hands. If you wear gloves and touch an object that has the living virus on it, you may still be exposed as you touch the gloves to remove them and still need to wash your hands.
* **What about masks?** The CDC continues to emphasize that masks are not a necessary or effective way to protect a healthy person from the coronavirus. Masks should be worn by people who are sick, or persons tending someone who is ill if the sick individual is not wearing a mask.
* There are additional tips in the **General Information** below to help you protect yourself and others from the coronavirus.
* If you have any questions or concerns regarding the coronavirus or the steps being taken by IYR, please direct them to HR at [HumanResources@youthranch.org](mailto:HumanResources@youthranch.org) or call 208-377-2613 and ask to speak with HR.
* Thanks for your attention. We’ll have more soon!

**General Information:** The number of cases in the US continues to increase, although Idaho still has no reported cases. Nationally, schools and universities are closing and large public gatherings such as conferences and sporting events have been canceled. Here are some tips to help you stay corona-free.

When Should I Stay Home?

* Employees with a fever or other flu-like symptoms should stay home and notify their supervisor. According to the CDC, a fever is a temperature of at least 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius or higher. Your temperature should be measured without the use of fever-reducing medicines (medicines that contain ibuprofen or acetaminophen).
* Flu symptoms are different than those of a cold and usually come on suddenly. People who have flu often feel some or all these symptoms:
* Fever or feeling feverish/chills (but not everyone with flu will have a fever)
* Cough
* Sore throat
* Runny or stuffy nose
* Muscle or body aches
* Headaches
* Fatigue (tiredness)
* People may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults
* **Act quickly at the first sign of illness. The virus appears to be most contagious in the first days a person is sick. This isn’t a good time to “tough it out.” You will be exposing others to risk of infection.**
* **The CDC recommends that workers who have flu symptoms upon arrival to work or become ill during the day should promptly separate themselves from other workers and go home**until at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications, or after their symptoms have improved without the use of symptom-reducing medications (like cough suppressants), and in any case at least 4-5 days after flu symptoms started.

[[](https://www.eatthis.com/author/colby-hall/)<img src=”https://i2.wp.com/www.eatthis.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/default.jpg?fit=96%2C96&ssl=1” width=”96” height=”96” alt=”Avatar” class=”avatar avatar-96 wp-user-avatar wp-user-avatar-96 photo avatar-default” />](https://www.eatthis.com/author/colby-hall/)

How to Protect Yourself from Coronavirus when Eating Out

If you choose to eat out there are some time-tested tips you should be follow all the time to help you avoid picking up COVID-19 or any other germs while dining in a restaurant.

* Wash Your Hands! Sound familiar? Do it often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Restaurants are public places and not everyone is as healthy or sanitary as you, so take responsibility. If soap and water aren’t available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Coronavirus is not known to be transmitted through food, but hard surfaces (utensils, menus, salt and pepper shakers, condiments, door handles, and tables) can be contaminated. Each time you touch something (the menu or the ketchup bottle) avoid touching your face or eating until you wash your hands or rub them with hand sanitizer.
* Avoid Open Buffets: The protective plexiglass shields that cover buffet dishes are called "sneeze guards," but they are not even close to being 100% safe in keeping airborne contagions and bacteria from eventually landing on your plate. COVID-19 has not been shown to be passed through food, but bodily fluids from someone infected may be present on surfaces like serving utensils. When in doubt - leave the buffets out.
* Less Crowded Places Are Ideal: Limiting contact with lots of people lessens the chances of contracting the coronavirus. Smaller restaurants with fewer workers and patrons decrease your chances of getting sick.
* Check Food Safety Ratings: Most local cities and counties have a system for rating food safety. About 60% of [foodborne illnesses](https://www.eatthis.com/best-ways-avoid-foodborne-illness/) come from restaurants, and are directly related to kitchen and restaurant cleanliness. Check out how clean your favorite places are on-line (Google).
* Feeling Ill? Stay Home: If you feel under the weather, do the right thing and don't go out to eat. If you must, cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze with your arm instead of your hand to avoid leaving pathogens on door handles, sink faucets or any item you touch). The best way to keep the coronavirus in check is to not pass it along yourself.
* Eat in Smaller Groups: Eating at a big table with a large group increases the odds that someone might be sick. Pass on the large outing and choose a smaller date with just 2-4 people.
* Don't Believe the Hype: There are persistent myths surrounding coronavirus. There is no increased risk by consuming Chinese food. Drinking Corona beer has no effect, even though [38 percent of recently-polled Americans claim to be avoiding the beer](https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/5wpr-survey-reveals-38-of-beer-drinking-americans-wouldnt-buy-corona-now-301012225.html) just because of the name. There is no reason to avoid any specific food or brand to keep you safe.