

July Up High! 2020



MONTANA
FOOD & CONSUMER
SAFETY PROGRAM



Articles This Month:

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2. **Catching Covid-19**
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 - Have You Ever Wondered How Masks Work? (Video)
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[Monthly FCSS Conference Call](#)

Every 2nd Tuesday at 9:00 AM

Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/818968973>

Or dial in using your phone:

United States (Toll Free): 1 (877) 568-4106

United States: (646) 749-3129

Access Code: 818 968 973

1. TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



Thank you to all of you that have participated in our first virtual Summer Institute. We hope that the information you gain about Environmental Health in Schools can aid you in your work with these institutions. Additional resources on the school rule and school environmental health can be found online on the [DPHHS School Rule page](#).

- MEHA has cancelled the Fall Conference for this year, 2020. Although this is a loss of opportunity to meet with fellow sanitarians and learn about a variety of topics, we are working with MEHA to bring some of the speakers as webinars this fall and winter. Our office is always open to suggestions for webinar speakers or suggestions for topics for which we can seek out speakers.
- Looking for something online to earn some continuing education credits? The FDA has several online courses available to you through their learning websites. You must first [request an account](#) with the FDA, if you have not already done so, to access their ComplianceWire learning system. After approval, you will be able to access courses on their learning system at [ComplianceWire](#). In this system, you will find many courses related to retail food and the food code, including the courses required in Standard 2 of the Voluntary Retail Food Standards (courses listed in [Appendix B-1](#)). Another learning system used by the FDA is called [Pathlore](#), which also tracks in-person FDA courses you attend. You must also [request an account](#) in order to access this system and get access to both in-person and online training on this website.

Do you have a course you have taken online that you found helpful? Let me know and I will share it with others.

Our intern from MSU is continuing to collect information on food protection manager training offered in Montana and collecting information about the different accredited programs available to operators. I am still looking for opportunities for her to shadow sanitarians in the field. She can provide her own transportation and PPE for inspections. Please let me know if you can host her for a day.

-Nina

2. Catching Covid-19

History of Public Health: Mask as a Public Health Measure in the US

With the rise in COVID-19, wearing masks has become a hot topic. Some people see them as a way to help protect their fellow citizens, while others -an ineffective government overreach. This is not a new debate.

As far back as 1887, physicians in the United States were considering masks as a possible preventative measure. Here is an excerpt from an article, published in Scientific American, that cited experiments conducted with cotton stoppers in test tubes.

“Thus we see that as quarantine and disinfection will certainly slow spread of contagion from patient to patient, may we not confidently hope, by preventing the entrance of germs into the lungs and blood, by a properly constructed filtering mask to yet witness the spectacle of a population walking about the streets of a cholera infested city, without fear of its infection however deadly. As a properly made cotton filter worn over the mouth and nose must shut out all atmospheric germs of the ordinary putrefactive kind. We may be confidently assured that those of disease will be equally excluded.”

In 1905, Alice Hamilton, conducted experiments on doctors and nurses while they talked or coughed, leading her to recommend masks during surgery.

“I was told by a student in a large medical college in Chicago that he had often noticed at the clinics of a certain surgeon that, when the light was from a certain direction, he could see, from his seat in the amphitheater, a continuous spray of saliva coming from the mouth of the surgeon while he discoursed to the class and conducted his operation. Obviously, protection of the mouth, of some sort as to catch and impression the droplets of sputum, should be a routine precaution for surgeons and for surgical nurses during operations.”



It was not until the 1918 flu pandemic that mask wearing became mandatory in the US for the first time. San Francisco was the first city to require them. The Board of Health rolled out a campaign advising people, “Wear a Mask and Save Your Life! A Mask is 99% Proof Against Influenza.” There were also songs written about mask wearing, featuring such lyrics as: “Obey the laws, and wear the gauze. Protect your jaws from septic paws.”

Current directives ordering masks to be worn, including one recently from our own Governor Bullock, mark the second time in our Country’s history that we have had such requirements. No matter what side of the mask debate a person falls on, our leaders have made it clear what our responsibilities are.

-Staci

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## Masks, Distancing, & Shields Work in Preventing Pandemic Viral Spread

Misguided social media campaigns argue the opposite, buttressed by domestic and foreign agents.

Masks work.

This is the take-home message regarding the wearing of face coverings and social distancing efforts in helping control spread of the novel coronavirus absent a vaccine, according to a [June 1, 2020](#) report in the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet*. Specifically, the authors wrote: “face masks are associated with protection, even in non-health-care settings.”



SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the potentially deadly disease COVID-19, is the foremost pandemic since the [1918 influenza outbreak](#) that claimed an estimated 50 million lives worldwide during a 16-month period from approximately March 1918 to July 1919. The COVID-19 pandemic that began in late 2019 has swept across the globe in its first eight months to [infect](#) nearly 15 million known persons, killed 610,000 and crushed numerous national

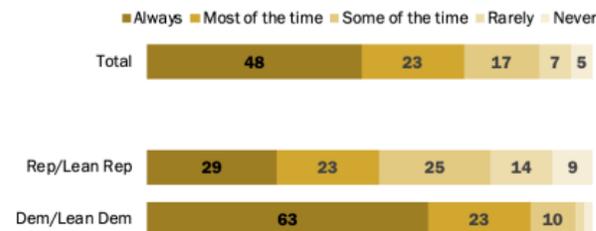


economies around the world, including the United States. The economic collapses have happened during efforts to combat viral spread, which can overwhelm healthcare facilities' capacity to treat victims. Dr. Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the [University of Minnesota](#), has compared the pandemic, not to turbulent water hitting us in powerful waves, but to another natural occurrence that might be of more concern to Montanans: raging

wildfire in which the virus burns along the forest floor and ignites the entire tree canopy, if left uncontrolled.

**About seven-in-ten Americans say masks should be worn in public places at least most of the time**

*Thinking about the coronavirus and your own local area, when people in your community go to public places where they may be near others, how often do you think they should wear a mask? (%)*



Note: No answer responses not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.  
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

With these facts smoldering in the background of the pandemic inferno, a [June 2020 poll](#) conducted by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center reported that approximately 71 percent of Americans support wearing masks in public places to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus. Indeed, “wearing of masks has become a catalyst for political conflict ... often viewed through a partisan lens,” wrote news reporter Tara McKelveyon on behalf of the [British Broadcasting Corporation](#) on July 20, 2020. Writing for the July 2020 edition

of *Scientific American*, social science Professor Peter Glick at Lawrence University in Wisconsin, commented further on the topic explaining that “some male leaders won’t take COVID-19 safety precautions,” such as donning masks, because they “value projecting a tough guy image over promoting the common good,” and not wearing a mask is perceived by the advocate as being associated with increased physical risk.

Even the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has been thrown into the mask mix, as illustrated in a June 30, 2020 [press release](#) from the U.S. Department of Justice. Specifically, the press release reads the “ADA does not provide a blanket exemption to people with disabilities from complying with legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operations,” meaning persons absent a legitimate disability directly related to wearing a mask cannot legally use ADA law to refuse wearing a face covering.

Adding to an already needlessly controversial topic, [Carnegie Mellon University](#) researchers based in Pennsylvania reported in May 2020 that much of the discussion involving the pandemic and stay-home orders was fueled by foreign agents that use “convincing bots” to spread misinformation with the intent of undermining western democracies by deepening divisions between people. The misinformation is then often unwittingly disseminated by domestic users of social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, Reddit and YouTube. Specifically, Dr. Kathleen Carley, professor in the School of Computer Science said of the misinformation campaigns: “We do know that it looks like it's a propaganda machine, and it definitely matches the Russian and Chinese playbooks, but it would take a tremendous amount of resources to substantiate that.”

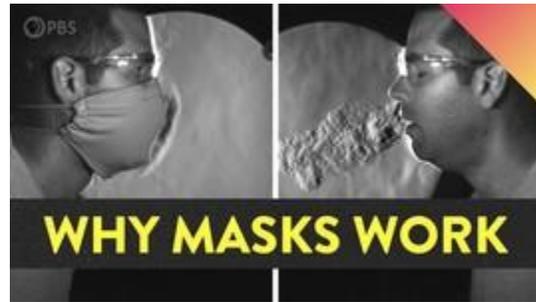
-Jeff

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Have You Ever Wondered How Masks Work?

I know I have.

With the backpedaling from the CDC about masks it's no wonder people are a little skeptical. Yes, data says this, and sure, research says that -but what's really going on when you put a mask on your face?



To find out, you can watch the 7 minute video "[How Well Do Masks Work?](#)" from PBS.org that lays it all out there.

-Keturah

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## Test Your Knowledge: Are Self Service Buffets Allowed...?

In the past few weeks, we have gotten numerous questions regarding the Governor's Directives on the allowance of self service buffets. Under Phase II (which we are currently in), the only change for retail food establishments are:

1. Increase in the number of people at a table from 6 people at a table to 10 people at a table.
2. Restaurant capacity increases from 50% to 75%.

Under the Phase 1 Directive (released on April 22, 2020), self service buffets are not allowed. This is found on Page 8 of Appendix A in that same directive. The restrictions from Phase I are still in effect for all restaurants. Counties are strongly encouraged to investigate all complaints of self service buffets, as many facilities are re-opening them without consulting the health department.

Please let me know if have any questions on this.

-Alicia

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Regarding Frequently Asked Questions

The [COVID-19 FAQs](#) have been updated online with [further mask information](#) as well as information from the Montana High School Association regarding their guidance for school sports this coming fall. The [PDF version](#) of the FAQ can be found on the website as well and the new questions/answers have been highlighted in yellow.

Every Thursday at 10AM we have an opportunity to meet with the Governor's Office and the Joint Information Center to discuss questions we are getting related to the

directives. If you have questions that you are getting frequently in your office and they have not yet been addressed in one of the FAQs please send them to JIC@mt.gov and cc me (eevanson@mt.gov) we will review the question. If we can't answer it immediately we will add it to the agenda for the meeting.

Following this process has allowed us to improve the consistency of answers provided statewide.

-Ed

3. LICENSING UPDATE

Please remember to send your Cooperative Agreement Amendment and your 2nd Quarter Inspection Report by August 1st, the payment will be made on August 15th. If you have questions on what should be included on the 2nd Quarter Report, contact Ed or myself.

-Gail

4. Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB's)



We may start seeing more reports of algal blooms as the season continues to warm up. August is usually our 'hot' month with more than 30 public reports received by our program. County Environmental Health programs may also receive questions and reports from concerned recreationalists. Please feel free to direct these folks to our [HAB's website](#). People can learn more about identification of algal blooms, as well as symptoms and prevention of HAB's associated illnesses. They can report a current algal bloom for investigation or look at map of 2020 public reports to see if anything has been reported at their favorite swim hole. There are even a couple of really neat pictures of Montana HAB's.



The map has been revamped this year and I think it's even more useful for regulation and general public information purposes. There is a "current advisories" tab that currently contains five reports that have been investigated and deemed advisory worthy. Four are caution and we do have one closure of a small pond in Gallatin county that tested positive for anatoxin. Sample and testing data is updated on these reports now as well.

-Erik

5. OUTBREAK: *Salmonella* Newport

Currently we are investigating an outbreak of *Salmonella* Newport. Initially we were told it was strictly in Montana, now 23 states have related cases. No specific food item, store or restaurant has been identified, therefore the CDC is not recommending that consumers or retailers avoid a particular food at this time.

- Illnesses began on dates ranging from June 19th 2020 - July 11th 2020
- Infected people range from ages 0 to 92 years, with a median age of 40
- 54% of ill people are female
- Of 117 ill people with information available, 31 have been hospitalized
- No deaths have been reported

Illnesses might not yet be documented due to the time it takes between when a person becomes ill and when the illness is reported. This takes an average of 2 to 4

weeks. Please see the [Timeline for Reporting Cases of *Salmonella* Infection](#) for more details.

-Sadie

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Department of Public Health & Human Services

If you are in crisis and want help, call the Montana Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 24/7, at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) or text 'MT' to 741-741.

Stay Connected with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

