



Health and Human Services
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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Lincoln County

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lincoln County will enter Extreme Risk category on December 18th.

NEWPORT, Ore. – Lincoln County Public Health reports 131 new confirmed cases since November 29th of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Although there are two days left in the two-week reporting period, our case rate has already surpassed the level to enter “extreme risk” as of December 18th. During each two-week reporting period if Lincoln County has 97 confirmed and presumptive cases then we will be in the extreme risk category. The extreme risk threshold is set at a rate of 200 cases per 100,000 people. In addition to the rise in cases, Lincoln County has also had 6 people in local hospitals this week with COVID-19.

Public Health is notifying the community before the official notice from the State of Oregon so that individuals and business can start to prepare now. Some changes that will happen effective Friday, December 18 are:

- Indoor dining is prohibited while outdoor capacity reduces to 50 people.
- Faith institutions and funeral homes reduce indoor capacity to 25% or 100 people total, whichever is smaller. Outdoor services limited to 150 people.
- Indoor entertainment, recreation, and fitness is prohibited.

- Long-Term Care facilities may have outside visitation only.
- Offices must require remote work if able and offices close to the public.
- Outdoor recreation & fitness facilities are limited to 50 people.
- Outdoor social and at-home gatherings are reduced to a maximum of 6 people. Indoor social gatherings remain at 6 people.

Case investigators in Lincoln County have been completing detailed investigative interviews with all positive COVID cases. Public Health is keeping up on case investigations and contact tracing but are now asking the public to help by being proactive in notifications. Sometimes staff are not getting the full picture from the people they speak with because they either forgot a few contacts or they do not want to share who their contacts are.

The community can help public health during this surge by doing the following:

- If someone knows for a fact that they are a close contact of a confirmed COVID case, we are asking that they start their quarantine immediately and not wait for public health to call them.
- If someone learns they are positive, make a list of the people they have been around for the 48 hours prior to symptoms or the 48 hours prior to the tests, whichever is earlier. The information public health needs is name, date of birth, and phone number for each contact. This will help speed up the contact tracing process. If comfortable, notify these contacts on your own so they know to quarantine.

“We expected to see an increase in cases this fall and winter, and right now it is increasing at a rate where it is becoming difficult to keep up with all of the contacts” said Public Health Deputy Director Florence Pourtal.

Case investigators have begun prioritizing outbreaks, specifically in high-risk settings such as long-term care facilities and other congregate spaces. In addition to the positive cases, there are 150 contacts being monitored daily. This is a substantial increase in cases for Lincoln County. While public health is

keeping up, they are having to pull staff in from other programs to keep up with the cases.

An "[after the test](#)" guide is available that explains the steps to take after a COVID test, while waiting for results, and then if you test positive. It includes information on isolation and quarantine, and when and how to tell close contacts and employers.

Lincoln County has also adapted a COVID-19 [outbreak guide](#) from Multnomah County to offer employers at businesses with multiple cases, so they know what information to gather and send to Public Health. The toolkit includes employee sick leave information, protocols on employee testing, and details about when an employee can return to work.

"We have hit our limit," Pourtal said. "Now we're asking everyone to be a partner in the work with us."

For more information on the state's response to the pandemic, please go to coronavirus.oregon.gov

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