

KITTITAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
VIDEO UPDATE
Tuesday, January 5, 2021

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Today's video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hn3eJJbLtMU>

KCPHD channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyQzBwJLbkLj7WueKJ5w7mQ/>

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Good morning, it's Dr. Larson here to talk about COVID-19. Welcome to 2021! This year will be better than 2020; that's a promise.

We are continuing to have high numbers of cases of COVID-19, and in fact this morning, we had three new patients admitted to the hospital with the disease. It's not just the numbers of cases going up, but the number of people in the hospital going up as well. We expected those numbers to keep going up for a little while because of the Christmas and New Years holidays.

If you went somewhere, and were with a large group of people for either holiday - it's been four days since New Years and ten days since Christmas - consider that you were exposed and please consider getting tested. The COVID clinic is open 9 AM to 5 PM seven days a week and there's no charge for the testing. Insurance companies are waiving co-pays and deductibles, so it doesn't cost anything. Being tested is a way to look out for your neighbors.

Our current incident rate is 554, which is up from 455. Again, the recommended incident rate for moving into Phase 3 this past summer was 25 cases per 100,000 for 14 days. Our percent positive rate increased from 13.1 to 15.8 this week. One of the metrics we will be looking at moving forward in 2021 is having that number be less than 10%. We're not quite there yet.

We continue to have patients in the hospital with COVID-19. We have had a few recent deaths in the community, members of our community who had the disease. Make sure to check in with your neighbors.

All K-12 schools are back in session as of yesterday, with a hybrid model. They are offering testing to all faculty and staff, as well as students who are sick. They are using rapid antigen testing, with a goal of keeping K-12 education moving

forward. We may even be able to expand that if we continue doing the things we know work: Social distancing, masking, and not getting together in large groups.

Governor Inslee has continued his restrictions until next Monday, January 11. We'll see what happens after that. The current recommendation remains to stay in your small bubble, within your small groups, and don't do things inside. Doing things outside like hiking and skiing are totally fine, but indoor activities are high risk.

We have started immunizations in our county, and have gotten through most of the 1A group. The state is working on groups 1B and 1C. I would expect the lists for those to come out later this week. We still need to get the vaccine for those folks, but should at least have some direction as to where to go. There's a state-level vaccine finder available.

If you will be in a high risk group, the Public Health Department will communicate with you via press releases and those types of things, letting you know how to access the vaccine once we know the groups. We have given out more than 1000 vaccines so far. We have vaccinated all our long-term care facilities but one, and that one (Pacifica) will be vaccinated tomorrow.

The health care providers are starting their second dose of the vaccine on Thursday of this week. In Washington state, we are not planning on stretching out the vaccine by not giving the second dose because there's not a lot of science behind that yet. There's also not science behind having the dose of Moderna vaccine. That is not happening as far as we know.

My ask is for you to get vaccinated when your turn comes. We need a large percentage of the community vaccinated to get businesses going again, to get schools open again, and back to what we could consider normal.

Get vaccinated. Watch out for your neighbor. Stay home when you're ill. That's a big thing. Don't go to work or to school/preschool if you're ill.

And make sure to be kind to your neighbors. Thanks a lot. Take care.

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Transcription provided by:
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