

KITTITAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
VIDEO UPDATE
Tuesday, February 9, 2021

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Today's video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OdvbiwcskU

KCPHD channel:

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

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Good morning. It's Dr. Larson talking about COVID-19.

I wanted to talk about a few things today: The numbers getting better; the reason we should still be masking, physical distancing, and washing our hands; the vaccine rollout; and the variants of COVID-19 you've probably been hearing about.

Our numbers right now are really amazing. Our incident rate is 189, which is down 234 from last week. We've not been below 200 since before Christmas. The goal, if you recall from last July when we were going into Phase 3, is less than 25 per 100,000.

Our percent positive rate is 6.9%. The goal is to be less than 2%.

But the numbers are coming down. People are masking and social distancing, and that's why we're not seeing disease in the K-12 schools. This is allowing them to open more, while still maintaining 6' social distancing.

We're in Phase 1 of the Governor's reopening phases. I believe the numbers should allow us to move into Phase 2 next week. This is for the South Central region, which includes our neighbors to the south and to the east (Columbia, Walla Walla, Yakima, Benton, Franklin cities). We're working on these metrics with them so we can all move into Phase 2.

The numbers are also allowing us to open sports up again since Phase 1 allows some low-risk sports. This coming Saturday, our cross country team is having a meet at Franklin Park. There will be masking and social distancing, and they will have some different starting recommendations.

But opening up the sports allows young people to move forward, addressing issues of depression. This gives them something to do.

We are still having to follow the guidelines and the phases. We don't have Phase 3 guidelines yet.

In regard to vaccines, we currently have a waiting list. There are a few more questions allowing us to fine-tune who should really be on the list. We are in Phase B1, which includes adults older than 65, and people older than 50 who lives in a multi-generational household. If you know someone in the B1 category who does not have access to the internet or the ability to reach out to us, please help them with that.

We have had people call us and ask if they can help their neighbor sign up. The answer is yes. Please do help get the folks eligible to sign up for the COVID-19 vaccine to get signed up.

We all need to get vaccinated for a variety of reasons. To come back to some semblance of normalcy, we need at least 70% of people vaccinated or having had the disease.

We are still waiting for more vaccine from the state. There's some hopeful information regarding the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. That should be looked at by the FDA by February 25, and then it's usually a couple of weeks after that to approve or not approve the vaccine, based on efficacy and safety guidance.

The FDA used to look at the data (not press releases, or reviews of the data, but the actual data itself) for nine to 12 months. That has now been compressed to three weeks, so they have a lot of work to do.

Please help your neighbors get signed up.

The phone number for you to call if you have difficulty with computers or can't figure it out on your own is 933-8315. Someone is on these phones Monday through Friday.

I want to talk a little bit about variant disease. We still need to continue wearing masks and social distance because of the COVID-19 variants. The modeling is predicting that by the end of April, the B117 variant will be the predominant variant of the disease. This variant is about 50% more contagious, so it's important to get vaccinated, wear masks, physical distance, wash hands, and watch out for our neighbors.

Make sure to be kind.

We'll see you next week. Thanks a lot.

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Transcription provided by:
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