

KITTITAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH  
VIDEO UPDATE  
Tuesday, October 20, 2020

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Good morning, it's Dr. Larson from Public Health. I am happy to be back doing some more COVID-19 videos. We are working with some public relations folks, starting in November, so we will have videos again more regularly.

Everyone should be kind because everyone is having a hard time. There is a lot going on.

We know that masks and social distancing will be important through Summer 2021, as we await a vaccine for COVID-19.

As you know, we have started K-12 school again in Ellensburg. High school started on Monday of this week, Middle school started on Monday of last week, and K-12 started the Monday before that. Things are going well in that regard.

Kittitas School District is still doing well. In six weeks, they've had two positive cases. The other school districts are starting as well. We're getting kids back to school so that folks can get back to work.

However, the numbers in the community are going up.

There have been three increases in cases that we've seen throughout the period of time we've had COVID-19.

An outbreak at Twin City Foods delayed our movement from Phase 1 to Phase 2. That was a community outbreak. The people who work there are part of our community and have been here a long time. Then that got better.

When we moved into Phase 3, everyone let their guard down and we had an uptick of cases at the nursing home and long term care facilities. This included 22 deaths in these facilities, deaths directly attributable to COVID-19.

We got those under control and now we have a third uptick of cases, this time at Central Washington University. This is not unexpected.

They have had a group of people working really hard on this since January. We had our first case in January, when a community member

returned from a trip to China. We thought they may have COVID-19, so they were tested, isolated and quarantined. They didn't have the disease, but we started thinking about about how to get the Central students back.

The Central students are a big part of our community. We knew with young adults, we'd have a little bit of a problem with COVID-19.

In September, we had 46 cases of the disease with CWU students and 55 cases in the community as a whole. In October so far, we have 78 cases with CWU students and 71 cases in the rest of the community so far. We know CWU is having a large impact on our numbers. That's why we have been able to open our schools even though we're above the 75 cases per 100,000 for 14 days.

Public Health is working with CWU, and all the school superintendents to get this issue under control and make sure people are being safe and able to get what they need.

We are working hard. Darren Higashiyama is now our Incident Commander, which allows me to deal with disease management, and the COVID-19 vaccine as we get to that point in the future.

There will be more to come. You will begin seeing me on a regular cadence. I'm glad to be back. Make sure to wear your mask, maintain social distancing, and be kind. Thanks a lot. Bye.

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Transcription provided by:  
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Today's video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dn5apg4cD4>

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

