

KITTITAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
VIDEO UPDATE
Wednesday, February 3, 2021

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Today's video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ6D11GE9l0>

KCPHD channel:

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

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TEXT:

Good morning, it's Dr. Larson talking about COVID-19 in Kittitas County.

I will talk about a few things today: Our current data, where we're at with COVID-19 vaccine availability, activities to avoid on Super Bowl Sunday, and being safe and watching out for others.

We are doing really well with our COVID-19 data.

As of last week, our incident rate was down 28% from the week before. We were at 347.9 cases per 100,000 for 14 days, and that number is on a downward trend. We're currently getting four or five positive cases a day, which is really good because at Christmas, we had about 25 cases a day.

That means people are paying more attention to masking, social distancing, and to the other things they need to do like not spending time indoor with others.

Our hospital in Kittitas County was pretty full a week or two ago, but that rate has gone down as well. The hospitalizations weren't all because of COVID-19, but if the hospital is full, and the staff is in quarantine because of COVID-19, it's hard for the hospital to take care of us.

I slipped on the ice but I didn't break my leg. [References leg brace.] Make sure you're being really careful as the weather changes.

As of this morning, we don't have anyone in the hospital with COVID-19. The intensive care unit occupancy has gone down 78% from last week. We were basically full last week, and now we have one or two people.

As for our percent positive rate, we're at 11% which I'm really

happy about. That means one out of 10 people getting tested are positive for the virus. We had been up to 28% to 30%, which meant that one in every three people were positive. This means that people are doing the things they need to do to be safe, which is the things we've been saying for a long time (masking, social distancing, and washing hands).

There are very few cases of COVID-19 in the schools. We're still doing close case and contact investigation with the public schools.

Central Washington University has taken on their own case and contact investigations since the beginning of the quarter, and they are testing both students and staff on campus as well (both symptomatic and random testing). That process is going well.

Let me talk about vaccinations now.

In Kittitas County, we're limited by a couple of things, primarily vaccine availability. Not enough has been produced to get to our county. That's pretty much the end of the story. Our Incident Management team, in conjunction with Emergency Management led by Rich Elliot from the fire department, has built a tremendous process for mass vaccinations. There are also a lot of community partners involved, like the hospital, Central Washington University, the business community, etc.

There are clinics both in Cle Elum and Ellensburg running four days a week. Last week, 1073 doses of the vaccine were administered in Ellensburg and 1093 in Cle Elum. The majority of the people receiving the vaccine were older than 65 years old.

We met the target we were shooting for, which was people older than 65 and people 50 years old or older living in a multi-generation household (for example, a 50 year old with children at home as well as a 79 year old parent that they're taking care of in their home).

We also primarily vaccinated people from Kittitas County. Legally, we can't limit people coming from other counties, but we can prioritize Kittitas County residents, which is what we are working on doing.

This week, we didn't receive as much vaccine from the state. 975 doses of the Pfizer vaccine was given at the fairgrounds, and 200 doses of the Moderna vaccine is being given in Cle Elum. As we get enough people in Phase B1 vaccinated, we can move into the

other phases (B2 through B4), but it's all dependent on how much vaccine is available.

We are hopeful that the Johnson and Johnson vaccine will be approved. This one is just one shot, so less concern about cold storage. The data is showing that it's as safe and effective at keeping people out of the hospital and preventing severe disease. That data is being evaluated by the FDA; the vaccine isn't currently approved.

We are starting to see variants of the virus in Washington state. There have been three cases of the B117 variant here. Governor Inslee has made it a pretty to do as much testing for the variants as we can. There may be some mask requirements that will change because of that. It appears that the B117 variant is *more* infectious. More to come.

For the time being, be safe. Follow the guidance (wear your mask, socially distance, and wash your hands). And please, only watch the Super Bowl with your immediate family. It's a huge holiday for a lot of people, with people getting together to socialize. This isn't the thing we should be doing this year. Stay home, watch it on your own television, and be safe.

Take care, we'll see you next week.

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