

KITTITAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH  
VIDEO UPDATE  
Tuesday, May 18, 2021

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Today's video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izZ0bcpqCw8>

KCPHD channel:

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

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Good morning, it's Dr. Larson talking about COVID-19. I want to talk about masking today, about our vaccination strategy, and what's happening with COVID-19 in Kittitas County currently.

On Thursday of last week, the CDC said that those who are vaccinated can take off their masks indoors and outdoors. That's based upon really good science that says that the vaccines are great for protecting not just hospitalizations and deaths, but also from me getting symptomatically ill or able to give COVID-19 to others. We know the vaccines are safe

Governor Inslee said the state would follow the same guidance. We're still waiting for the Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) to provide guidance for businesses.

If you own a business in town, you're still required by L&I to have your customers wear a mask indoors. Once L&I provides guidance, you'll have to figure out how you're going to tell who's vaccinated and who's not. What type of mask policy will you have? Right now, we're still waiting on L&I. I apologize for the confusion related to that. It was released to us at the same time it was released to you and we had no way of getting ahead of that.

Vaccines work, they're safe, they protect me, I protect you. We have a lot of vaccine clinics happening this week. We had one at the 301 yesterday, vaccinating 42 people (mostly those in the service -- restaurant and bar -- industry, and mostly young people), so that was great. The ages ranged from 20 to 88, so we still have some older people coming in to get vaccinated.

In the county, we're continuing to hospitalize young people. We have three people under the age of 70 in the hospital with COVID-19 right now. I also saw this morning that we have one 41-year-old person in the emergency room with COVID-19. So, we're still

seeing sick people. There was a 21-year-old college student at the emergency room yesterday. If people are sick enough to go to the emergency room, we know people are still getting sick.

We're still seeing plenty of disease, although the numbers appear to be coming down a little bit. That's a good sign and is a reflection of more people being vaccinated. There are plenty of opportunities to be vaccinated in our county (pharmacies, Central Washington University, multiple clinics at the fairgrounds, and one at Cle-Elum Roslyn school tomorrow). We're giving vaccine out to children of parents interested in having their children ages 12 years and up vaccinated.

Things are looking pretty good. The governor did say that Washington will open up June 30, which is dependent upon our numbers going down.

The pieces still in place will involve restrictions on schools, perhaps some restrictions on indoor masking depending on what Labor and Industry says, and restrictions on large events. How do we get a large event like the Rodeo and Fair to be done safely? The way to do that is to get more people to be vaccinated.

So, I'm asking you to encourage your friends and family to be vaccinated. Listen to their concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine, and give them the information on how we can all move forward with vaccination.

Take care of yourself. Continue to wear your mask indoors until L&I says we don't have to, and continue to watch out for your neighbor. Thanks a lot.

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