

KITTITAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
VIDEO UPDATE
Wednesday, June 30, 2021

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

KCPHD channel:

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

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Good morning, it's Dr. Larson talking about COVID-19. It's June 30. As most of you know, Governor Inslee released most of the restrictions on our behavior (activities) today. We'll talk about that, about COVID-19 vaccine, about our local health order, and also about the Delta variant (and the reasons people are talking about still wearing masks even if we're vaccinated).

On June 30, or sooner if 70% of the people in the state were vaccinated, Governor Inslee was going to most of the restrictions on our activities in the state of Washington. We didn't quite get to 70% initiating vaccine of people 16 years and older. A vaccine is currently available for everyone 12 years of age and older in the United States, and probably soon (maybe in August or September), there will be a vaccine for kids 5-11 years old as well.

As of midnight last night, the restrictions were released.

Things outdoors are totally fine. There are no restrictions on outdoor activity, social distancing, the number of people you can have to your house for a barbecue, etc. If you want to go to the Gorge this summer, or the Ellensburg Rodeo, those things are going to happen. We know there is less transmission from outdoor activities.

As for indoor activities, there are restrictions if you will have more than 10,000 of your closest friends over for a barbecue. In actuality, this number has to do with things like going to a concert at the Tacoma Dome, or a basketball game in Portland. With more than 10,000 people in attendance, there is a limit of 75% capacity unless COVID-19 vaccine status is checked.

So those are the main two changes.

There are some restrictions involving masking for businesses. Labor and Industries has not changed their masking requirement,

so businesses need to have their employees masked if they're not vaccinated.

As for schools, currently the students and teachers will have to wear masks whether vaccinated or not. The Secretary of Health has to rescind the health order for those to change; I think they will change soon. Currently, if school was in session (or if someone is in summer school), students still have to mask. If there's a basketball tournament at the school in Cle Elum, participants will have to mask.

Those are the changes that happened as of today.

In Kittitas County, we are in our third day in a row with zero cases of COVID-19 from our major testing center at the hospital. We have been averaging 2.1 cases per day over the last two weeks. That's really good.

We're still struggling to get people vaccinated, though. We have about 50% of people initiating vaccine in Kittitas County, meaning that 50% of people do not have the vaccine. The data for vaccine is still really strong. It's good for the variants that are out there. It's really good for kids, and adolescents. We had an issue with some inflammation of the heart that occurred with some adolescent males, but it was self-limited, meaning it goes away. Those kids received ibuprofen or Aleve in the emergency room and they are totally fine. That was evaluated by the FDA and our safety measures have been working appropriately.

If you have had the COVID-19 disease, and you get vaccinated, you're protecting yourself from the variants moving forward, and you're getting longer lasting immunity than someone who has not had COVID-19 but who has been vaccinated. So there's a great benefit for those who have had COVID-19 to be vaccinated.

When it comes to the variants, we're starting to see some information coming out. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended that even people who are vaccinated wear masks indoors, if there are a lot of unvaccinated people. This is because vaccines are only 95% effective.

If there are 100 people with a 50% vaccination rate, someone still has about a 5% chance of getting COVID-19.

Los Angeles has chosen to recommend masks indoors. That's because we're not sure what will happen with the Delta variant, which will soon become the dominant variant in the United States.

This is what is happening in Israel. There, they have made some restrictions on activity because of this variant.

The answer? *Be vaccinated.* We're still encouraging this. We are trying to answer people's questions about vaccination. You can get vaccine through KVH, and at almost all local pharmacies. Please, please get vaccinated so we can continue getting back to normal. We will still have some local outbreaks because a lot of people are not vaccinated locally yet.

I was speaking with a friend this morning who practices medicine up in Newport, Washington (in the northeast corner of the state), and they only have about 30% of their population vaccinated. They would be more likely than we (who are at 50%) to have an outbreak, but if we were at 70% in Kittitas County, that would be even better for us.

Be safe. Be careful in the heat. It will begin getting cooler soon. Stay hydrated. Be kind -- people are having a hard time. Be thankful for all those people who worked really hard the last 18 months to get us where we're at.

Thanks a lot. Have a good week. And give me a call if you need anything. Thanks, bye.

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