



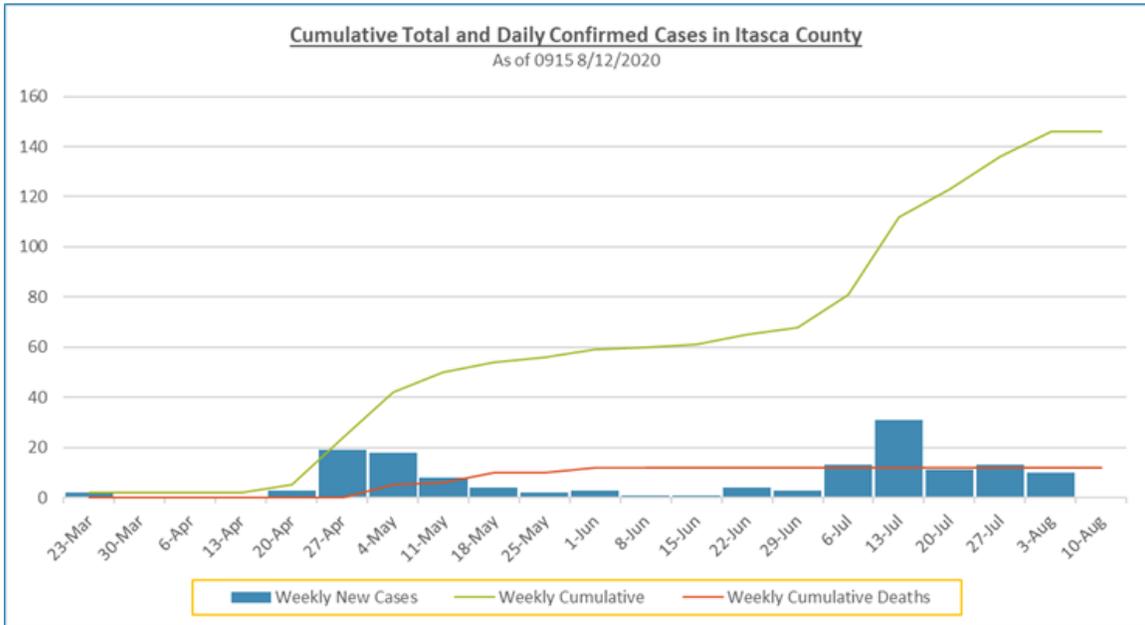
ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
**ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER**  
1209 SE 2nd Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744-3983  
Hearing Impaired Number TDD: 218-327-5549  
**(218) 327-2941**

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

ITASCA COUNTY MONITORING LOCAL CONDITIONS AS SCHOOLS IMPLEMENT  
RETURN TO LEARN PLANS

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **August 12, 2020**) – The cumulative total of confirmed COVID-19 cases among Itasca County residents stands at 146 as of Wednesday, Aug. 12, with no additional cases since Saturday, Aug. 8. The county has seen no additional deaths attributable to COVID since early June, although eight residents remain in isolation and an unknown number are in quarantine due to a close personal contact with someone infected.



Source: Minnesota Department of Health

Three Itasca County long-term care facilities are identified on Minnesota Department of Health’s website as having at least one positive case in their facility in either a resident or staff member. Facilities in the county have taken COVID-19 precautions, have increased their testing, and will be removed from the state website when they have reached 28 days without an additional positive case. All are moving positively in that direction.

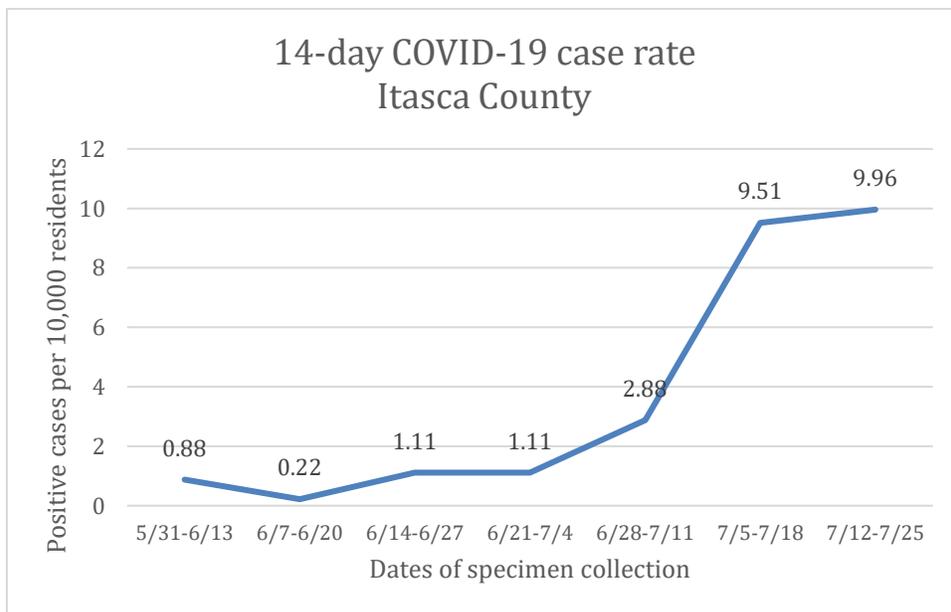


“Keeping the spread of the virus down in Itasca County has real implications for our communities as well as affected individuals,” said Kelly Chandler, Itasca County Public Health department manager. “Itasca County schools are looking to reopen to in person learning options. Our businesses hope to remain open. Many of our community members have underlying health conditions or are immunocompromised.

“Whatever the motivation might be, we are relying on our community members to do their part to slow the spread of COVID-19. This will take some continuing sacrifice for us all and rethinking how we are responding to the virus. Are we continuing to mask when in public spaces, are we social distancing from our neighbors, are we staying home when we are sick? Our schools and businesses and vulnerable populations need us, and we need them.”

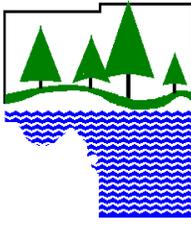
Minnesota Department of Education has recommended policy options to schools as they consider their safe learning plans for fall, based in part on local conditions. According to Minnesota Department of Health, a case rate of 10 or more per 10,000 residents over 14 days may be considered an elevated risk of local disease transmission, especially when the level of cases is sustained or increasing over time.

While new 14-day case rate numbers are due soon from the Minnesota Department of Health that are expected to show a lower case rate, most recent data (July 12-July 25) puts Itasca County at a rate of 9.96.



Source: Minnesota Department of Health, updated Aug. 6.

Questions or concerns among Itasca residents may be directed to the Itasca COVID line, which is currently staffed 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday to address questions related to COVID-19, executive orders, etc. Messages left at other times will be returned during business hours. The Itasca COVID line number is 218-327-6784.



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*Note to media: Itasca County Health Department will host 30-minute press briefings on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. as needed. The August 20 briefing will focus on preparing students, families and schools for fall. Recordings available. Contact [anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us](mailto:anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us) for more information.*

Itasca County Public Health media contacts

Kelly Chandler (218-327-6144 and [Kelly.chandler@co.itasca.mn.us](mailto:Kelly.chandler@co.itasca.mn.us)) or Anna Anttila ([anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us](mailto:anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us)).

