



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
**ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER**  
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Visit us at: [www.co.itasca.mn.us](http://www.co.itasca.mn.us)

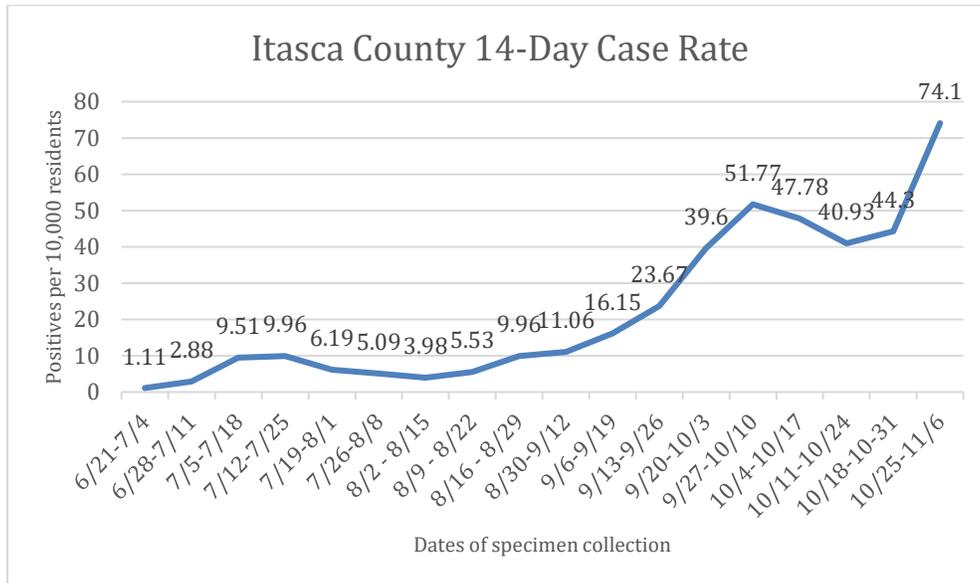
*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

ITASCA COUNTY SURGES TO A NEW RECORD LEVEL OF COVID

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **Nov. 9, 2020**) – A 19<sup>th</sup> Itasca County resident, a man in his 70s, has died from COVID-19 as rates in the county reach a new peak. As of noon Nov. 9, the number of Itasca County residents with positive COVID diagnoses reached 1,109, with 205 in the past week and 357 over the past two weeks. Eleven Itasca residents are hospitalized and three are in intensive care units.

“If you are in a group setting, just assume that someone has COVID,” said Kelly Chandler, department manager for Itasca County Public Health. “If you care about your family, your friends, your community—wear your mask. Avoid gatherings. Keep six feet distance. When we made these choices in October, we drove our rates down. We can—we must—do it again and keep doing it.”

A key measure for schools, the 14-day rate of positive cases per 10,000 residents, has reached an Itasca County record of 74.1, just weeks after a promising decline. Still, there is no sign of spread within school settings.



Sources: Minnesota Department of Health and Itasca County Public Health



Given the very high level of COVID-19 in Itasca County, contact tracing with individuals has been suspended. Instead, public health officials will focus on protection of high-risk settings such as schools, childcare facilities, long-term care, places of worship, workplaces and sports teams.

Especially given hospital bed and ICU shortages throughout the region and state, Itasca County residents are again strongly urged to get flu vaccinations.

“We don’t want to use up health care resources needlessly,” said Chandler. “Facilities are, unfortunately, needing to re-implement surge plans from last spring. Each of us needs to stay on top of our health right now, building up our resilience and keeping extra pressure off our health care systems.”

Itasca County has created a local dashboard with current local data, including positive COVID cases by ZIP code. It is at: <https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/798/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Information>.

Itasca residents with questions or concerns may leave them at the Itasca County COVID message line, with calls returned 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. 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 next briefing will be Nov. 12. 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

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