



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EFFECTIVE QUARANTINES BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT WITH RENEWED RISE OF
COVID IN ITASCA COUNTY

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **Dec. 7, 2020**) – Gatherings and other recent contacts with infected individuals have renewed the local rise in cases of COVID-19. As of Dec. 6, 356 Itasca county residents have active cases of COVID and are in isolation. Two additional Itascans have died from COVID-19 complications, a male and a female, both in their 80s.

In the past seven days, 317 new COVID-19 cases have been identified among Itasca residents and 571 in the past 14 days. Of those, 61 currently are in the hospital, of which 12 are in intensive care units. Itasca County has seen 26 of its neighbors die from COVID-19 complications.

The 14-day positive case rate per 10,000 Itasca residents is 119.7 as of Dec. 3, which is up from 101 as of Nov. 30 and down from mid-November when the reported rate was 129.9.

“Vaccines, even in Itasca County, are on the near horizon,” said Kelly Chandler, Itasca County Public Health division manager. “We need to stay strong for the next few months and keep our neighbors and household members from the devastating impacts of being sick with COVID.”

It can be confusing to navigate what to do if your household is impacted by COVID. A few of the most misunderstood issues:

- If someone in your home is COVID positive or has been exposed, other household members should keep distance within the home. Isolate the infected person as much as possible and do not share common spaces such as kitchens and bathrooms.
- If it is not possible to completely separate from a household member who has tested positive to COVID or has been exposed, the quarantine period for household members extends 14 days after the day a person with COVID-19 comes out of isolation, on top of quarantining while the person with diagnosed COVID is in isolation in the home.

Commitment to effective quarantining will prevent continuous spread (and additional quarantining) within households, workplaces and communities.



Centers for Disease Control has a useful fact sheet available online here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>

“Prevention always is your best defense,” said Chandler. “Faithful mask-wearing, keeping six-foot distance from others outside your household and not gathering still are critical. Second most important is to be very aware of how testing, quarantine and isolation work.”

For those seeking testing, call ahead to Essentia Deer River, Bigfork Valley and Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital for details. Also, state-provided tests are available through the National Guard Armory in Hibbing (<https://www.primarybio.com/r/hibbing>) and an at-home test ordered online (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/athome.html>).

If you experience even mild symptoms that resemble a cold or allergies, stay home and seek testing. If you are waiting for COVID test results, stay home. If you have a positive test, your household members also need to quarantine for 14 days from last exposure.

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. Current local data and information also can be found at the county’s website here: <https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/798/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Information>

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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 scheduled briefing will be Dec. 17, with updates from area health care providers. Contact 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) or Anna Anttila (anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us).