



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER

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FREE COVID VACCINES ABUNDANT IN ITASCA COUNTY

County begins a new year with better, but still extremely high, rates of infection

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **Dec. 30, 2021**) – Spread of COVID-19 in Itasca County continues a steady decline, following a pandemic peak in mid-November 2021. Risk of serious illness, hospitalization and death remains extremely high, however, for the 44 percent of Itasca residents who are not yet vaccinated.

The 14-day COVID case rate per 10,000 Itasca residents is 65.2 as of Dec. 30, down from the November high of 144. Over the past week, 115 new infections were diagnosed among Itasca County residents.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, one in every five residents (8,478) have been infected with COVID and one in every 396 residents (114) have died due to COVID infection.

All those ages five and older may access free COVID vaccinations and boosters at Essentia Health Deer River (Pfizer and J&J), Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital (Pfizer), Scenic Rivers (Pfizer and Moderna), Thrifty White Pharmacy (Pfizer and Moderna), Walgreens (Moderna), Walmart (Pfizer and Moderna), or CVS/Target (Moderna). Those ages five to 17 are specifically eligible for Pfizer, with 16- and 17-year-olds also now eligible for a Pfizer booster dose.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the signs of COVID include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea.

If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you might have COVID-19, the CDC recommends staying home, taking care of yourself, and staying in touch with your doctor. Be sure to get care quickly if you have trouble breathing, or have any other emergency warning signs such as persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or pale, gray or blue-colored skin, lips or nail beds. Many of these symptoms are similar to influenza.

Testing for COVID and influenza is widely available in Itasca County at clinics and hospitals. At-home COVID tests are available through local and online pharmacies and a free at-home saliva test is available through the Minnesota Department of Health website.

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 through Friday. The Itasca COVID line number is 218-327-6784.

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