



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COUNTY COVID SPREAD EVEN LOWER, BUT NOT GONE

Vaccines and testing continue to be key to staying safe

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **March 11, 2022**) – Three weeks of dropping COVID rates in Itasca County give reason to be optimistic of a near-normal spring. Still, COVID is not yet considered “controlled” in the area until it goes even lower.

The week of March 3 – 10 saw 40 new laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Itasca County, bringing the 14-day case rate per 10,000 residents down to 21.1. A rate of five is considered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as “under control.” The county’s 14- day case rate per 10,000 in January, a pandemic peak, was 172.

“What a relief that Itasca County has driven down the spread of COVID,” said Kelly Chandler, Itasca County Public Health division manager. “While the public health community continues to track new variants, so far it looks like we can be optimistic. That doesn’t mean, though, that we can ignore COVID. We have neighbors still getting sick and the virus remains highly infectious. Vaccines, boosters and immunity are really helping, but COVID still is among us.”

PCR tests are the most accurate way to detect COVID and remain available through area clinics. At-home (antigen) tests may be purchased through local retailers. The federal government is offering a second set of four antigen tests per household through the <https://www.covidtests.gov/> website.

Itasca County Public Health recommends:

- Test if you develop COVID-like symptoms, which can be as mild as a headache, sore throat or stuffy nose, or as severe as shortness of breath, cough, fever, loss of taste and smell.
- Test if you are traveling – before and after.
- Test five days after if you were exposed to someone with COVID.
- Test if you attended a large event or gathering where there was close contact within 6 feet of others.

Itasca residents with questions or concerns may leave them at the Itasca County COVID message line, with calls returned 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Itasca COVID line number is 218-327-6784.

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