



County of Malheur

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release

Malheur County sees significant increase in COVID-19 outbreaks

Case investigations have revealed a concerning rise in the number of people infected with COVID-19 in outbreaks throughout the county, the most significant in Vale and Ontario.

“We’re very concerned with this trend of outbreaks, especially in the 97918 ZIP code, including Vale and Willowcreek areas. With a number of new infections linked in the last three weeks, there is the potential for a significant increase in cases when people don’t follow precautions. This hurts schools and businesses and risks the health and safety of the elderly and most vulnerable. We need to act swiftly as a community to stop the spread,” Malheur County Health Department Director Sarah Poe said.

There are currently at least three outbreaks with active cases in Vale, including Vale High School, Vale Elementary School, and at the Malheur County Jail. Ontario outbreaks include Fry Foods, Baker-Murakami Produce, and Snake River Correctional Institution.

The Oregon Health Authority details outbreaks by county in its [Weekly Outbreak Report](#), the most recent published on Jan. 27. While all of the known outbreaks are included in the current report, the numbers and dates of most recent onset are no longer accurate in some cases.

“We know, through our case investigations, that these outbreaks are growing,” Poe said. “People who have even mild symptoms, please be tested and isolate immediately. If you believe you have had potential exposure, get tested and quarantine.”

It is also important that those who test positive and are contacted by a case investigator share accurate information about who they have been in contact with. This is critical to efforts to contain the spread of virus and protect public health.

More information about how to respond if you have symptoms or believe you have been exposed are available on Oregon’s [Safe + Strong website](#). The site provides a [symptom checker](#) and a [ways to help you and your family stay safe](#). For testing availability in Malheur County, visit [COVID-19 testing in Malheur County](#).

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