



County of Malheur

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1108 S.W. 4th Street • Ontario, OR 97914 • (541) 889-7279

February 8, 2021
For Immediate Release

Malheur County sees significant drop in test positivity; no change to risk level status

The weekly [Risk Level Metrics: Schools and Counties](#) report released today by the Oregon Health Authority shows a significant drop in the COVID-19 test positivity rate for Malheur County, one of two indicators used in determining which of the four risk levels the county is in.

Part of the drop in test positivity rate is likely attributable to a change in the way the state measures data. Previously, only electronic lab reports, or ELRs, were being measured, meaning tests results that were not submitted from a lab were not counted in the test totals. It appears that Malheur County's electronic case reports, or ECRs, that come from rapid tests such as the BinaxNOW tests used by MCHD, have been added to the overall totals, beginning with the week of Jan. 10.

While the drop in positivity rates is a step closer to moving Malheur County out of the Extreme Risk level, the rate of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 over 14 days remains high, at 306. That number would have to be less than 200 for movement to occur.

"We're not there yet but we're getting closer, and these numbers are worth celebrating. The case count is coming down as well, and that's a direct result of the people of Malheur County following safety guidelines. Let's keep doing what we're doing so we can get the county back open for everyone," MCHD Sarah Poe said.

Weekly reports are posted on the MCHD website as they become available. Visit our [COVID-19 CASES](#) page regularly to follow Malheur County's status.

The Malheur County Health Department does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, political beliefs or source of income. Interpreter services and/or other assistive aids are provided at our facility at no cost. Our facility is accessible.