



County of Malheur

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release

Malheur County's declining new COVID-19 case counts bring optimism

For the past week, [Oregon's daily COVID-19 update](#) has shown a marked drop in the number of new COVID-19 cases reported in Malheur County. There have been just three new cases since Sunday and three days this week, including today, with no new cases reported. The dramatic dip in numbers is encouraging, but people are advised to be optimistically cautious: Continue to follow safety guidelines, and get tested if you have symptoms or believe there is a chance you might have been exposed.

“We are thankful to everyone in the county for helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by avoiding gatherings, wearing face coverings, and staying home when sick or exposed to a positive case,” Malheur County Health Department Director Sarah Poe said. “These numbers are encouraging, but we need to continue to do our part to protect our families and our community. We also need increased testing to keep our positivity rate down while new case numbers drop.”

Today, Malheur County remained at the Extreme Risk level of the state's updated [county risk assessment](#), based on new case counts from Jan. 24 to Feb. 6. Lower case counts could help Malheur County drop into a lower risk level, but only if the test positivity rate remains below 10%. It is currently at 7.7%, but the rate of testing has continued to decline over time.

“Frequent and continued testing helps us to not only reduce the spread of the virus, particularly by those who are asymptomatic, but also keep test positivity rates down. We need positivity rates and new case counts to remain low so that we can move out of Extreme Risk, get our county businesses back up and running, and our lives back to normal,” Poe said.

The next update of county risk levels will occur on Feb. 26 and be based on data from Feb. 7 through Feb. 20.

Malheur County's declining new case numbers might be partly attributable to local vaccination efforts, Poe said. To date, more than 5,000 doses of vaccine have been administered in the county, although some of them are not counted toward the state's total because they were given to people who work in the county but live in Idaho. That number includes first and second doses. Statewide, more than 649,000 doses of vaccine – Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech - have been distributed.

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As of today, COVID-19 has infected a reported 3,299 Malheur County residents and claimed the lives of 56.

MCHD offers free drive-up COVID-19 testing by appointment four days a week at the MCHD office:

- Tuesdays, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
- Wednesdays-Fridays, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., 1-3 p.m.

For an appointment or more information, call 541-889-7279.

Testing is also available at Rite Aid and through several health care providers, including Valley Family Health Care and Snake River Pediatrics.

For more information on Malheur County COVID-19 data, visit <https://malheurhealth.org/covid-19-cases>

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