



County of Malheur

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release

Malheur County's test positivity and case rates continue to decline

For the third consecutive reporting period over the past four weeks, COVID-19 test positivity and case rates in Malheur County have dropped, allowing the county to remain at Moderate Risk when risk level assignments are made this Friday.

During the two-week period from March 7-20, there were 19 reported cases of COVID-19, equal to a case rate (number of cases per 100,000 people) of 59.3. Moderate Risk includes case rates from 50 to <100. The county's test positivity rate during the same period was 1.1%, the lowest it has been since the [statewide risk level system](#) went into effect last December. A weekly [Risk Level Metrics](#) report is released by the Oregon Health Authority every Monday.

Malheur County Health Department Director Sarah Poe said the reduction in cases is largely due to the increasing number of people who are vaccinated. A vaccine report shared by the OHA this week shows that as of March 17, a total of 9,014 vaccines have been administered by Malheur County healthcare providers and pharmacies since local vaccine deliveries began on Dec. 14. While allocation to county vaccine providers remains inconsistent from week to week, more vaccine is consistently available to a growing number of providers, giving people in Malheur County a variety of options for vaccination.

All three of the vaccines currently approved for emergency use by the FDA – Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson – are available locally, as are drive-up and office-visit appointments. MCHD continues to offer first come, first served vaccine clinics every Thursday beginning at 1 p.m. at the Four Rivers Cultural Center.

“With the opening of vaccine eligibility this week for people in [Phase 1B, Group 6](#), we expect to see Malheur County's case count continue to decline if more people are protected by the vaccine quickly. We are all anxious to get out and enjoy the nicer weather and the outdoor activities that come with it, and we can do that more safely if the majority of our population gets vaccinated as they become eligible,” Poe said.

Each of the three available vaccines has been proven safe and effective against severe illness due to COVID-19. For more information, visit the [CDC's COVID-19 Vaccine website](#).

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