



Eastern Idaho Public Health

1250 Hollipark Drive • Idaho Falls, ID 83401 • Phone: (208) 522-0310 • www.EIPH.Idaho.gov

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Mimi Taylor, PIO
Office: (208) 521-6722

Increased Cases of COVID-19 Being Seen in Eastern Idaho Public Health's Region; Increased Vigilance in Prevention Efforts is Encouraged

(SE Idaho) – As restrictions have been loosened and the State is re-opening, an increase in COVID-19 cases, along with a death in a neighboring health district, have been documented throughout Eastern Idaho over the past week. In Eastern Idaho Public Health's (EIPH) region, most of the confirmed and probable cases have been associated with gatherings where people attended while ill and social distancing and other health and safety protocols were not observed.

In the early months of the pandemic when the Stay Home order was in effect across the state, we found that close contacts of positive cases tended to be their household members. Now, as people are starting to get out and interact with others, we are starting to see small clusters of cases being linked to multiple households. "We understand that social connections are vitally important to people, but we also want people to take precautions when interacting with others to minimize the opportunities for COVID-19 to be spread," stated Geri Rackow, EIPH Director.

We anticipate we will continue to see cases of COVID-19 in our health district for some time, but being able to quickly identify the positive cases and any close contacts will help slow the spread of the disease. If you suspect you have been exposed to COVID-19 or that an exposure has occurred at your business, organization, event, etc., please contact Eastern Idaho Public Health immediately on our COVID-19 hotline (208-522-0310) so we can help you assess the situation and navigate the process to determine what next steps need to happen. Public health is here to support our communities through the challenges created by this pandemic.

SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) is very contagious and easily transmissible in places where people are in close contact with each other (within 6 feet), engaging in something that involves a lot of breathing, like singing, yelling or talking, and spending more than 10 minutes together. Everyone needs to know that they are susceptible to contracting COVID-19 and especially if they are not taking seriously the recommendations of public health professionals. It is important to remember that although COVID-19 has a high recovery rate in healthy individuals, people over 65 years and individuals with underlying health conditions are at risk for more severe illness and complications from COVID-19, including death. Please take extra precautions if you associate with people in these two categories.

Increasing COVID-19 cases underscore the importance of practicing COVID-19 risk reduction strategies which include:

- Staying home if sick.

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- Practicing self-distancing (maintaining at least 6 feet between individuals).
- Wearing a fabric face covering or mask when in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Covering your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer.
- Limiting close contact with people who are sick.

Stay Informed

EIPH's website is updated daily to reflect the current COVID-19 situation in the health district. Details on all our confirmed and probable cases can be found on our new data dashboard located on our website (www.EIPH.Idaho.gov) directly next to our COVID-19 case count graph or via direct link at https://public.tableau.com/profile/eiph#!/vizhome/COVID-19_15899874131590/COVID-19InEIPH. In addition to information on our cases, there is other relevant information including hospital and clinic infrastructure data, case demographics, and much more.

Also, EIPH has a call center to answer questions regarding COVID-19. Call 208-522-0310 or toll free at 855-533-3160 to speak with someone. The call center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In addition, questions can be submitted via email to COVIDQuestions@eiph.idaho.gov or asked through our Facebook page at @EIPH.Idaho. For more information, contact Mimi Taylor at 208-533-3155 or 208-521-6722.

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