



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
**ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER**  
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Visit us at: [www.co.itasca.mn.us](http://www.co.itasca.mn.us)

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

VACCINATION EXPANDING AS ITASCA COVID CASES SLOW

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **March 9, 2021**) – COVID-19 cases continue to emerge in the county, although at a slower pace. Over the past seven days, 28 new cases were diagnosed among Itasca County residents and 76 in the past 14 days. As of March 5, the county’s 14-day case rate per 10,000 residents has slowed to 18.6 after a sustained level of more than 20 in past weeks.

COVID-19 vaccinations have reached nearly 70 percent of those age 65 and older in Itasca County, which has triggered expansion into new tiers of vaccine availability through local health care providers and pharmacies.

Those over age 65, educators and early childhood care providers continue to be the state’s top priority for vaccination. With progress and increased supplies of vaccine, Minnesota has opened two additional priority groups.

Phase 1b Tier 2 includes:

- Minnesotans with specific underlying health conditions: Sickle cell disease, Down syndrome, those in cancer treatment or immunocompromised from organ transplant, oxygen-dependent chronic lung and heart conditions (COPD & CHF)
- Targeted essential workers: food processing plant workers
- Minnesotans with rare conditions or disabilities that put them at higher risk of severe illness

Phase 1b Tier 3 includes:

- Minnesotans age 45 years and older with one or more [underlying medical conditions identified by the Centers for Disease Control](#)
- Minnesotans age 16 years and older with two or more underlying medical conditions
- Minnesotans age 50 years and older in multi-generational housing
- Essential frontline workers: Agricultural, airport staff, additional child care workers not previously eligible, correctional settings, first responders, food production, food retail, food service, judicial system workers, manufacturing, public health workers, public transit, and U.S. Postal Service workers



Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital has expanded vaccination to Phase 1b tier 2. To make an appointment, log in to myChart or call 218-326-7344. Appointments are being scheduled one week at a time, with the schedule for the week opening up on Mondays at 9:00 AM. This is when the availability is best, but appointments may be available throughout the week.

Essentia Health Deer River has expanded vaccination to Phase 1b tier 2. They will likely be expanding vaccination to Phase 1b tier 3 within the next week. To make an appointment, visit <https://www.essentiahealth.org/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine-information/> or call 218-786-1750.

Scenic Rivers Health Center is scheduling COVID vaccinations throughout its service area. To make an appointment at the Bigfork clinic, call 218-361-3274.

Bigfork Valley is anticipating additional supplies of COVID vaccines. Those 16 and older, whether a current Bigfork Valley patient or not, interested in receiving vaccine may be placed on their waiting list by calling 218-743-4444, Option 4, or email at [COVIDWaitList@BigforkValley.org](mailto:COVIDWaitList@BigforkValley.org). Include name, date of birth and phone number in your message. Current vaccine-related information may be found at [www.BigforkValley.org/covid-19-vaccine](http://www.BigforkValley.org/covid-19-vaccine).

Thrifty White Pharmacies has expanded vaccination to both Phase 1b tier 2 and Phase 1b tier 3. To make an appointment, go to [www.thriftywhite.com](http://www.thriftywhite.com).

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe is vaccinating those 18 and older, including residents of Cass lake, Bena, Walker, Deer River, Federal Dam, Longville, Boy River, Laporte, S. Lake and Inger. Appointments may be made by calling 218-368-4763.

Walmart Pharmacies eligibility information and appointments are availability at [www.walmart.com/covidvaccine](http://www.walmart.com/covidvaccine).

Itasca residents with questions or concerns may leave them at the Itasca County COVID message line, with calls returned 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. The Itasca COVID line number is 218-327-6784. Information about vaccination options and current local data and information may be found at the county's website here: <https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/798/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Information>

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*Media briefing: Itasca County Health Department will host 30-minute press briefings on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. as needed. The next scheduled briefing will be March 18.*

Itasca County Public Health media contacts  
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