

**ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER  
1209 SE 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, Grand Rapids MN 55744  
Hearing impaired number TDD: 218-327-5549  
(218) 327-2941  
[www.co.itasca.mn.us](http://www.co.itasca.mn.us)

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

#### **DELTA VARIANT NOW IN ITASCA COUNTY**

(Grand Rapids, Minn. – Aug. 5, 2021) – As spread of the COVID-19 grows again across the United States, including Itasca County, area clinics and pharmacies are stocked with vaccine. Nearly half of residents, though, have yet to get theirs.

“The COVID-19 virus is mutating, which is what viruses do as they spread through populations of people. The Delta variant has now been identified in Itasca County,” according to Kelly Chandler, Itasca County Public Health division manager.

“With Delta, the effects include a higher viral load for those infected, meaning, higher amounts of the virus are detected in the bodies of those infected. If you are wondering why this is significant, it means persons with Delta become more physically ill than with previous strains of the virus. And, the virus spreads more easily from person to person.

“Thankfully, 99.9 percent of persons vaccinated are not contracting COVID, are not being hospitalized, or significantly ill or dying in Minnesota. The percent of cases in persons vaccinated is 0.1, which is all the more reason to be vaccinated if you are eligible.”

Pfizer vaccine, authorized for those 12 and older, is available at Essentia Deer River, Fairview Grand Itasca and Walmart.

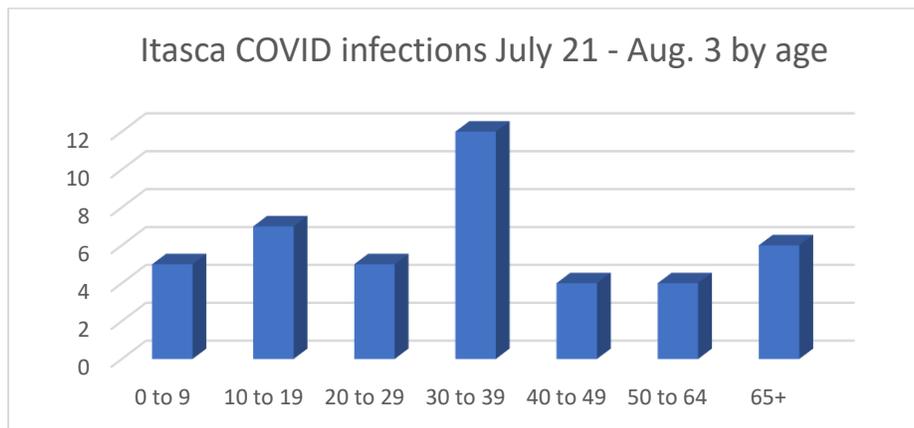
Moderna, authorized for those 16 and older, is available at Bigfork Scenic Rivers, CVS/Target, Thrifty White (next to Culver’s), Walgreens and Walmart.

The single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine is not currently available in the county, although it can be found in other communities by going to [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov).

Of all those eligible (ages 12 and older), 56 percent of Itasca County residents have received at least their first dose of vaccine.

Anyone 12 and older is eligible for a \$100 gift card if they receive their first vaccine between July 30 and Aug. 15 (see the state's COVID website at <https://mn.gov/covid19/100/>).

The rate of COVID infection among Itasca County residents continues to climb since a low in mid-July. Over the past two weeks (July 28-Aug. 3), case rates in the county more than doubled from 12 to 30, primarily among residents in their 30s. The week before that, only one person had been diagnosed in the county with COVID.



When measured as a rate per 10,000 residents, Itasca County has grown to 7.2 from 0.9 two weeks ago.

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 through Friday. The Itasca COVID line number is 218-327-6784.

--END--

*Note to media: An online press briefing via ZOOM is scheduled for Aug. 19, 2021, 10:00 a.m., with a focus on back-to-school plans for area schools.*

**Itasca County Public Health media contact:** Kelly Chandler, 218-327-6144 and [Kelly.Chandler@co.itasca.mn.us](mailto:Kelly.Chandler@co.itasca.mn.us).