



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRANSMISSION OF COVID IN ITASCA COUNTY NOW HIGHEST IN NORTHEAST MINNESOTA

(Grand Rapids, Minn. – Aug. 17, 2021) – The resurgence of COVID-19 in Itasca County continues, with cases doubling each week. Between Aug. 9 and 16, another 57 Itasca area residents were diagnosed with the infection.

When measured as a 14-day rate per 10,000 residents, Itasca County stands at 24.1, up from 14 last week and less than one in mid-July.

Itasca County now is rated by Centers for Disease Control as having a high level of community transmission, the highest of any Northeastern Minnesota county. Those in high transmission zones are encouraged by CDC to wear masks if indoors and outside the home, regardless of vaccination status.

“There’s no doubt about it. The Delta variant of the virus is even more dangerous,” said Kelly Chandler, Itasca County Public Health division manager. “Delta has a much faster incubation period of four days (versus six) and an infected person infects an average of another six people. It’s spreading here and vaccination is the best way to disrupt the spread. In terms especially familiar to Itasca residents, vaccines act like a fire break.”

Vaccination rates among all Itasca County residents have bumped up over 50 percent as fall activities begin and school is on the horizon. Of those 12 and older, nearly 60 percent (58.1 percent) of those eligible have received at least their first dose of the vaccine.

Pfizer (for those over age 12) and Moderna (for those over age 18) vaccines are widely available through Itasca County clinics and pharmacies.

Itasca County has received a small allotment of single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine for those 18 and older and will offer it between 3:00 and 5:00 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 20 at the Itasca Resource Center in Grand Rapids. Pre-registration is recommended at the Itasca County website; walk-ins welcome as long as supplies last. The J&J vaccine is otherwise no longer available in Itasca County and supplies throughout Minnesota are in high demand.

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.

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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
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