



Chaffee County Public Health

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Chaffee County Public Health Provides Updates on COVID-19

Chaffee County, Colorado- As we venture into a new year and have had a few weeks of understanding more about the COVID-19 variant, Omicron, Chaffee County Public Health (CCPH) would like to update the public on the current pandemic situation. At the time of this release, 1 in 10 people in Colorado is infectious with COVID-19, most likely Omicron. Due to underreporting, it is possible that this figure across the state is 1 in 7 or even 1 in 5. As expected, Omicron is more transmissible than previous variants, and coupled with holiday behavior, we are experiencing unprecedented incidence across the nation, state, and county. This surge was expected. Even those who are following the public health mitigation measures are susceptible to this strain of virus. However, what we are seeing so far is a mild to moderate illness in most people, especially those who are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations which currently means they have received a booster dose.

Vaccinations and Boosters- Initial series and booster doses are available throughout the county, and a comprehensive list can be found at: bit.ly/ChaffeeCOVIDVaccines. Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the Pfizer booster was approved this week for people ages 12-15. Everyone 12 and older is encouraged to get a booster dose if it has been 6 months for the Moderna vaccine (for 18 years and older), 5 months for the Pfizer vaccine (for 12 years and older), and 2 months for Johnson & Johnson (for 18 years and older). An EUA was also approved this week for a third dose of Pfizer for immunosuppressed people ages 5-11. CCPH strongly recommends that people choose either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over the Johnson & Johnson vaccine due to greater effectiveness.

Testing- A comprehensive list of testing options throughout the county can be found at: bit.ly/ChaffeeCOVIDTesting. With the latest surge of COVID-19, testing is in high demand, and we are in jeopardy of experiencing a shortage in supplies. In addition, CCPH has recently learned that the Abbott Binax Now test (what has been the available rapid at-home test) is deficient in detecting Omicron in the first 48 hours of symptoms. It is unsafe to base any decisions on a negative Binax test when newly symptomatic. Therefore, CCPH will be modifying its testing strategy so that almost everyone gets a PCR test.

- If you receive a **negative** result with Binax
 - It is imperative that these tests are followed up by a more sensitive PCR test.
 - The current turnaround time from the state laboratory for PCR tests is 3-4 days. While waiting for a confirmatory test result, people should self-isolate or quarantine until they receive their test results.
 - More information about isolation and quarantine can be found at: bit.ly/ChaffeeQuarantine.
- If you receive a **positive** test result with Binax or PCR tests
 - CCPH urges the public NOT to seek out confirmatory testing if a positive result is received. This unnecessarily wastes testing materials that are in limited supply.
 - If a positive test is received, please also follow the isolation guidance at bit.ly/ChaffeeQuarantine.

- Likewise, if someone in a household tests positive and other household members who are close contacts are symptomatic, CCPH defines those household members as “probable positives” and therefore, a test is not recommended. A probable positive would follow isolation instructions.

Isolation Clarification- Current isolation information reflecting the recent update to guidelines can be found at bit.ly/ChaffeeQuarantine. This document will be updated as more is learned about the current and future variants of COVID-19.

As more people test at home, it is important that they understand when the timeline begins. According to epidemiologists at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), symptoms always win over the test date for starting isolation. Only when there are no symptoms is the start of isolation based on the test date; otherwise, it is the date of symptom on-set that determines when isolation should begin.

Example scenarios include:

- symptoms start on Monday, test positive on Wednesday: Day 0 of isolation is Monday, and you would isolate for Tuesday-Saturday (5 days following symptom on-set)
- test positive on Monday, symptoms start on Wednesday: Day 0 of isolation is Wednesday (even though you were isolating a couple of days before symptoms started) , and you would isolate for Thursday-Monday (5 days following symptom on-set)
- test positive with no symptoms: Day 0 of isolation is the day you were tested (not the day the results are received)

Mask Wearing for Early Release of Isolation and Quarantine- With the new isolation and quarantine guidance, consistent and appropriate mask wearing is required to release someone, regardless of age, on Day 6. Otherwise, additional isolation is recommended through Day 10. A specific type of mask is not required as long as it is closely fitted over the mouth and nose. However, N95, KN95, and medical/surgical masks are the most protective types of masks and currently recommended if available. While there is not a county-wide mask mandate in Chaffee County, these masking requirements are imperative to follow to avoid transmission of the virus past the 5 days of isolation or quarantine. About 30% of transmission in the past has been from Day 6-10, so it is critical that mask wearing is adhered to in fidelity. Healthcare workers may follow a variation of the isolation and quarantine requirements which will be determined by their employer. Many individual businesses, organizations, and facilities also have masking requirements

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