



Flathead City-County Health Department

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For immediate release:
November 5, 2020

COVID-19 Surge Continues in Flathead County

Kalispell, MT –A troubling surge of COVID-19 cases in Flathead County continues, placing additional strain on local schools, healthcare systems, and public health staff. The Flathead City-County Health Department (FCCHD) continues to contact all individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 and conduct case investigations, but the department can no longer alert all close contacts to their possible exposure. In order to manage the mounting workload, case investigators are now focusing their efforts on contacting and quarantining close contacts that belong to higher risk groups, such as the elderly, immunocompromised individuals, and those who work in restaurant, school, or healthcare settings.

Individuals who do not fall into a high risk group may not receive direct notification from FCCHD that they are a close contact. During the case investigation process, positive cases are asked to notify any other close contacts of their potential exposure. All close contacts should self-quarantine at home for 14 days since their last exposure. Instructions on how to quarantine, how to monitor symptoms and prevent the spread of COVID-19 can be found on the Flathead City-County Health Department website. Go to <https://flatheadhealth.org/close-contact-information/> and click on these documents:

- Potential COVID-19 Exposure Handout
- Information for Household Members of Close Contacts
- Caring for Someone Who Has Tested Positive for COVID-19

“Our case numbers are outpacing our staff’s capacity,” says Tamalee St James Robinson, Interim Health Officer of the Flathead City-County Health Department. “We’re seeing widespread community transmission stemming from social gatherings, large events, and restaurants and bars. Our department is utilizing all possible resources to manage the surge, but the community needs to continue doing their part to help mitigate the spread.”

Flathead County has received 283 new cases in the past 3 days, and to date, there has been twenty seven COVID-19 related deaths in Flathead County. “Nothing is certain, but with the way our case rates and hospitalizations are going, I think we will continue dealing with COVID-19 in Flathead County for quite some time,” states Robinson. “As a community we need to step up and take COVID-19 precautions seriously. We’re not out of the woods yet.”

