



ISLAND COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Administration

PO Box 5000

Coupeville, WA 98239

P: 360.679.7350 F: 360.679.7390

ISLAND COUNTY COVID-19 Updated Community Guidance December 30, 2020

Island County Public Health wants to make sure that the citizens of Island County have access to reliable guidance surrounding COVID-19. We update guidance bi-weekly and hope that you use this to help inform and empower yourself and our community.

Numbers and data

At the time of this writing, Island County has 882 confirmed COVID-19 cases, including 21 deaths. At this time, antigen test results are not included in the confirmed case count, but they are tracked locally. A case rate of 97.85 cases per 100,000 was calculated for the two-week period of 12/15/20-12/28/20.

Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is reporting significant delays in importing test data into the state system known as the Washington Disease Reporting System (WDRS). These delays may impact rates and case counts reflected on state dashboards.

DOH also recently released a [new report](#) that looks at rates of COVID-19 illness and death by race, ethnicity and language spoken.

In gratitude

We recognize that schools, business, families, and individuals have all sacrificed over the course of 2020 to control the spread of COVID-19 within Island County. We want to express our gratitude to the residents of Island County for the sustained effort to support the health of friends, family and the community. We are hopeful that 2021 will usher in brighter days, and we appreciate your patience and resilience as we work together to vaccinate our community and continue to control the spread of COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccine update

Island County will be releasing a bi-weekly COVID-19 vaccine update starting this week. Below are just a few highlights – look for a full update on Thursday.

COVID-19 vaccination has begun in Island County, marking a very welcomed development in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. WhidbeyHealth, in collaboration with a variety of community partners began vaccinating individuals in Phase 1a on Thursday, December 17th. Phase 1a includes high-risk workers in healthcare settings, high-risk first responders, and patients/staff of long-term care facilities. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of who is included in Phase 1a.

The arrival of the a COVID-19 vaccine is a welcomed development in the course of the pandemic. As we start to vaccinate our community, we need to continue to practice all of the safety measures recommended to limit the spread of COVID-19. It will take time to vaccinate our community, and a vaccine will not reduce community spread

for quite some time.

Currently, Island County Public Health is not administering the vaccine and there is not a waitlist system for upcoming phases. When we have more information about moving into the next phase (1b) we will release this broadly to the community. Patience is the key right now.

The [WA DOH COVID-19 Vaccine website](#) remains the most up-to-date source of information regarding the safety, phasing and availability of COVID-19 vaccine in Washington, as well as the [Centers for Disease Control's Vaccine website](#).

Welcome-in 2021 safely

Having a vaccine available is a great step forward in the COVID-19 pandemic, but until a large percentage of the population is vaccinated, we still need to support each other, and our community, by following all current safety guidance.

No matter how you choose to bring in 2021, please remember to keep the following in mind:

- Avoid close contact with people outside of your household. Stay at least 6 feet away from all other people who are not part of your household.
- Wear a cloth face covering anytime you are with people not from your household. This includes family members and close friends who do not live with you. Make sure the face covering fits snugly over your nose and mouth.
- Avoid confined indoor spaces. Outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities. If participating in an outdoor event is not possible and you choose to attend an indoor event, avoid crowded poorly ventilated, and fully enclosed indoor spaces. Increase ventilation by opening windows and doors if possible.
- Wash or sanitize your hands (and the hands of little ones) often.
- Stay home if you are sick or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19. If you are sick, have symptoms of COVID-19, or have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, stay home and away from others.

New travel guidance

Governor Inslee issued a [new proclamation](#) regarding prohibitions on travel from countries where a new variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus, known as 501Y.V, has been circulating. Specifically, the Governor announced that there will now be a 14-day quarantine requirement for anyone returning to Washington state after visiting the United Kingdom, South Africa and other countries where the new variant is known to be present.

Final thoughts

COVID-19 transmission is plateauing but hasn't decreased enough. The best estimate of the reproductive number (how many new people each COVID-19 patient will infect) on Dec. 5 was 1.03 in western Washington and 1.11 in eastern Washington. The goal is maintaining a reproductive number well below one—meaning COVID-19 transmission is declining—for a substantial amount of time.

Thirty-one of 39 counties had rates above 200 new cases per 100,000 people over the past two weeks. Sixteen counties had two-week rates above 500 new cases per 100,000 people. This indicates COVID-19 activity is

still high and widespread in the state.

Embrace available resources

- If you are struggling with Homelessness, call the Housing Support Center at (360) 678-8284.
- Learn about available COVID-19 pandemic assistance and other support services by completing the [online referral form](#) or call the Help Line at 360.678.2346 M-F 8:30am – 4:30pm.
- As the economic impacts of COVID-19 continue, more families are taking advantage of free meals provided by school districts. While all students may be provided free meals through the end of December, families are strongly encouraged to complete a School Meal Application now. This application determines a student's eligibility for free and reduced-price meals. Read more [here](#).
- The WA State Department of Commerce is collaborating with organizations to provide support through the [Small Business Resiliency Assistance](#) program. Support is available for small businesses and nonprofits in a variety of ways, including recovery and re-opening planning, employee retention, [and translation services](#).
- WA DOH also offers support and resources for mental health during COVID-19, visit their [mental and emotional wellbeing web page](#) and listen to their new "Coping with COVID" podcast and blog series. If you need someone to talk to about stress due to COVID-19, call [Washington Listens](#) at 1.833.681.0211.

If you have questions or concerns about COVID-19 in Island County, start by visiting our [website](#) or our [Facebook](#) page. The Island County call center may be reached at **360.678.2301**; Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm.