

COVID-19 BRIEFING

Updates on COVID-19 in Idaho



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

January 27, 2022

Welcome to the Department of Health and Welfare's monthly briefing on the department's latest news, communications activities, and resources for the COVID-19 pandemic.

New sections are marked **"NEW,"** and all other sections are up to date as of the time of publishing.



IDAHO ACTIVATES CRISIS STANDARDS OF CARE IN THREE HEALTH DISTRICTS IN SOUTHERN IDAHO

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) activated [Crisis Standards of Care \(CSC\)](#) on Monday, Jan. 24, in accordance with [IDAPA 16.02.09 – Crisis Standards of Care For Healthcare Entities](#) in three local public health districts – [Southwest District Health](#), [Central District Health](#), and [South Central District Health](#) – due to severe staffing and blood shortages.

The high number of both clinical and non-clinical staff unable to work due to the impacts of COVID-19 infections coupled with a nation-wide staffing shortage limiting access to contracted traveling staff is impacting current hospital operations. It is also limiting the ability of hospitals to maintain capacity for things like intensive care beds due to inadequate staffing. Additionally, a nation-wide shortage of blood and blood products is significantly impacting healthcare systems, and most have implemented blood conservation strategies.

This action was taken after Saint Alphonsus Health System requested CSC activation. DHW Director Dave Jeppesen convened the CSC Activation Advisory Committee virtually on Jan. 21. The committee recommended that CSC be activated statewide. Director Jeppesen made the decision to activate only in southern Idaho after reviewing current hospital capacity regionally. Other regions of the state are likely to move into CSC if current COVID-19 trends continue.

"The highly contagious Omicron variant has thrown us a curve ball," said DHW Director Jeppesen. "Once again, the situation in our hospitals and health systems is dire – we don't have enough resources to adequately treat patients. Please get vaccinated and boosted if you can and wear a high-quality protective mask in public places. Omicron is so much more contagious than previous variants, and even though a lower percentage of cases are ending up in the hospital, the record number of cases is still putting strain on our healthcare system."

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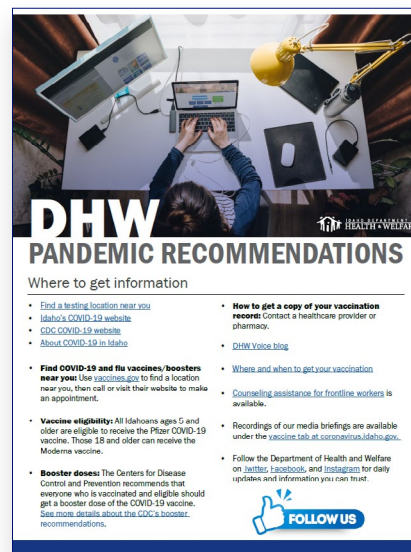
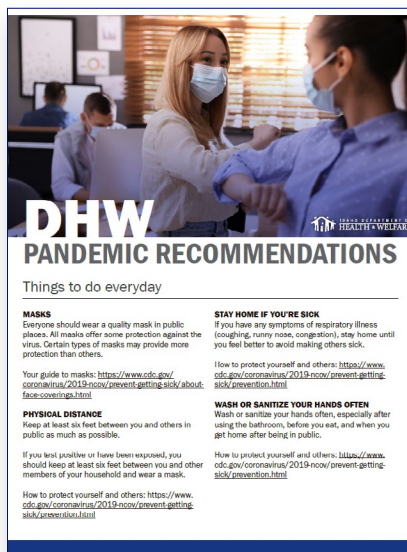
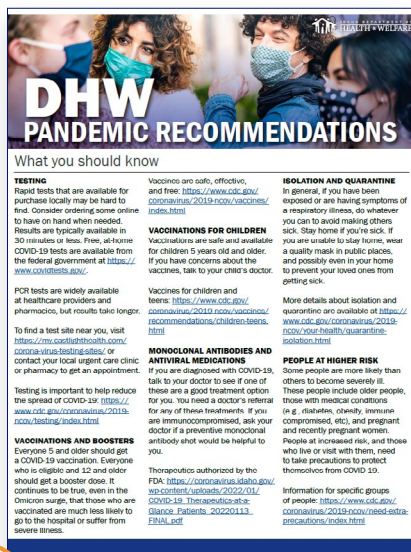


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DHW PANDEMIC RECOMMENDATIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN ONE FLYER

COVID-19 recommendations and guidance is changing quickly. Stay informed with all the relevant information you need to know to reduce your risk of COVID-19 disease during the pandemic. It's available at coronavirus.idaho.gov under the vaccine tab at https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/DHWPandemicRecs_ThreePager_220121_Final_R2.pdf



FREE, AT-HOME COVID-19 TESTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE from the federal

government at covidtests.gov. Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order four free, at-home COVID-19 tests. Orders will usually ship in 7-12 days.

PCR tests are widely available at local healthcare providers and pharmacies, but results take longer. To find a test site near you, visit <https://my.castlighthouse.com/corona-virus-testing-sites/> or contact your local urgent care clinic or pharmacy to get an appointment.



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NEW
INFORMATION

DHW PROVIDES ACCURATE INFORMATION EVERY DAY TO HELP COMBAT COVID-19 MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

One of the issues that all government and healthcare organizations face during the pandemic is the abundance of false and misleading information available on social media and other communications channels.

DHW remains focused on delivering accurate and up-to-date information daily through the following channels:

- Social media - [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram @dhwstories](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn](#)
- [DHW Voice blog](#) (new posts on Tuesdays and Fridays)
 - [COVID-19 Q&A: Masks are an important tool to protect against disease](#)
 - [From DHW Director Dave Jeppesen: The data tells the story of the vaccinated vs. the unvaccinated in Idaho](#)
 - [COVID-19 Q&A: When will the pandemic end?](#)
 - [Idaho COVID-19 numbers are trending in the wrong direction](#)
 - [COVID-19 resources to answer your questions about Omicron](#)
- [Weekly COVID-19 media briefings](#)
- Idaho's [Coronavirus website](#) and [DHW website](#)
- Daily responses to information requests from the public and the media
- Public Service Announcements

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WHAT MASK SHOULD I WEAR?

Along with getting vaccinated and boosted, experts recommend wearing a quality mask for optimal protection.

NO PROTECTION

 **NO MASK OR IMPROVED MASK USE**

- Mask should fit over your nose and nose and be snug against your face with no gaps
- Don't use masks that are damp, dirty, or damaged
- Don't wear masks with exhalation valves, which allow virus particles to escape

SOME PROTECTION

 **CLOTH MASKS**

- Washable and reusable. Masks should be washed at least once a day or as soon as they become dirty.
- Multiple layers of woven, breathable fabric

 **SURGICAL MASKS**

- Disposable, intended for one-time use
- Multiple layers of non-woven material
- Provides protection against large droplets

MOST PROTECTION

 **HIGH-FILTRATION MASKS (respirators - N95, KN95, KF94)**

- Varies by mask type, but equivalent up to 5 times with proper care
- Filters up to 95 percent of particles in the air
- Seals tightly to the face and proper fit (some nasal seal can interfere with the seal)
- Designed and engineered to meet international standards
- Designed and regulated to avoid counterfeits masks

 **! If you don't have access to a high-filtration respirator mask, double up. Single layer masks, such as surgical masks and gaiters, can be worn in combination with multiple layers or even a cloth mask over a surgical mask. Be sure your mask fits properly - you won't improve fit.**

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

A close-up photograph of a woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a white coat and a yellow scarf, laughing joyfully while holding a baby. The baby is wearing a white knit hat, a brown jacket with white pom-poms, and a white scarf. They are in a snowy environment with pine branches visible in the background.

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SCHOOLS

Updated weekly summaries of COVID-19 cases associated with schools are available each Monday on the coronavirus website under the [“Schools” tab](#).



LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

The summary of COVID-19 cases and deaths associated with long-term care facilities in Idaho is published on the coronavirus website on Fridays under the [“Long-Term Care” tab](#).

COVID-19 VACCINATION INFORMATION ONLINE

The [COVID-19 vaccination information web page](#) includes information on when and where to get vaccinated, and what to expect at a vaccine appointment. The [COVID-19 vaccine section](#) on the coronavirus website is updated regularly. The page includes the comprehensive COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ, recordings of DHW’s media briefings, underlying medical conditions that put people at greater risk for COVID-19, and Governor’s actions, among other resources. There is also a link available with resources for COVID-19 vaccine providers.

MEDIA BRIEFINGS

DHW hosts regular briefings for the media about COVID-19 in Idaho. . The remote events have included updates from Gov. Little and DHW officials, followed by a question-and answer session with members of the media. The general public can listen in.

For more information about the briefings, visit [coronavirus.idaho.gov](#), and watch the department’s Facebook and Twitter accounts for announcements. Recordings of past media briefings are posted on the state’s [coronavirus website under the vaccine tab](#).



COMMUNICATIONS FORUM

DHW’s Office of Communications, in partnership with the Gov. Brad Little’s communications director, hosts a forum for communications professionals in state agencies, health districts, healthcare agencies and facilities, and stakeholders to discuss COVID-19-related communications efforts and strategies. If you are a communications professional and would like to join the call, send an email to [communications@dhw.idaho.gov](#).