



Public Health Brief

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We Hold Our Future in Our Hands



Let me tell it like it is with some straight talk. With all the legitimate talk about excellent new vaccines, we have lost sight of the fact that the worst of COVID-19 is still ahead of us - not behind us. How bad things get in Alpine County does not depend on the federal, state, or local government. It is up to all of us and the crucial decisions each of us makes about our individual behavior that will determine how bad it will get in these winter months.

California and our nearby northern Nevada neighbors in Douglas, Carson, and Washoe Counties are seeing rapid increases in numbers of cases in the last month. Hospitalizations have increased more than 50% in the last 14 days. Increases in deaths typically follow soon after. Alpine County had only a total of 3 cases until late October – we now have 39 laboratory confirmed cases among residents of the county. There are 2 hospitalizations, and no deaths – so far. All cases have been on the Eastern Slope of Alpine County.

Where did these cases come from, and how is COVID-19 being spread in the county? It is not about business sectors such as restaurants or hotels or any other businesses. The state will likely turn up the dial on restrictions, apply the “emergency brake”, and move us in the near future into a more restrictive tier as a result of our recent surge in cases. This reminds me of a cannon being fired, missing its target, and causing collateral damage. Businesses may be forced to cut back or close due to our individual actions.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Alpine County Health Department, 75-B Diamond Valley Rd., Markleeville, CA 96120
Alpine County Board of Supervisors, Phone: (530) 694-2281
District 1: vacant, District 2: Ron Hames, District 3: Katherine Rakow,
District 4: Terry Woodrow, District 5: David Griffith

Every identified case is required to isolate in their homes for 10 days from the time that symptoms start. Our team of case investigators and contact tracers determines who has been in close contact with each case and asks them to quarantine for 14 days from their last exposure. We offer support for housing, food, and sanitizing supplies in each case if a person is not able to provide for themselves. In addition, we have the highest rate of COVID-19 testing in the state, as a coordinated program of testing, case identification, isolation, identification of close contacts, and quarantine are all essential to limit spread in the community.

What can we do to limit the number of new cases in Alpine County?

- Get tested. Testing is available 5 days a week at the Alpine County Health Department and the Washoe Tribal Health Center for all who have symptoms. For those who do not have symptoms, we have drive-through testing sites in Woodfords, Bear Valley and Kirkwood every week or two. Widespread testing allows early identification and effective efforts to limit the spread.
- Stay home if you are sick! This is the same message we preach each year in flu season, but it is even more important this year.
- If you receive a call from one of our staff, please answer the phone, and honestly provide us the requested information in order to protect your household, close contacts, and the community.
- If you have been instructed to isolate or quarantine, please do so! It disturbs me when I hear reports of people that we know have been asked to isolate or quarantine being seen grocery shopping or at a box store in Gardnerville.
- Do not participate in “gatherings”. I do not mean hundreds of people. I mean persons from out of your household, who might get together to enjoy a movie night with popcorn, or a game or puzzle night for example. Indoor gatherings with more than 12 people from more than 3 households are especially risky.
- Do not get tested assuming a negative result will give you a “Get Out of Jail Card” to travel over the holidays. A test only tells you what is in your body that day, not days later when you may go visit Grandma or other family members at increased risk of death from a COVID-19 infection. That would be the gift left behind that you do not want to be known for!
- Be compulsive about that face covering, your social distancing, and your handwashing. These small infringements on your rights will buy huge dividends by reducing risk to those you love.
- Remember – you are safer at home for the holidays! Begin planning for Thanksgiving 2021!

Some resources:

<https://www.webmd.com/balance/ss/slideshow-healthy-actions-feel-better>

<https://covid19.ca.gov/>

<https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/>

Warm Line: 530-694-1011

<http://alpinecountyca.gov/516/COVID-19>



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