

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 1/11/2022

RAVALLI COUNTY COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Hamilton, Mont. – Ravalli County is seeing an increase in reported COVID-19 cases. As of Monday evening, the county had 231 active cases. Including our first reported case of Omicron which occurred late last week. Public Health is seeing more reporting of positive home testing, with an average of about 8-10 reported positives a week. However there is still some question about the actual number of positive cases reported by residents using the antigen home test kits. While reporting to public health is recommended, it is not required. With the increase of illness home kits are becoming increasingly hard to find in Ravalli County. Public Health does not currently have any home kits in stock. Kits are on order with no set date when to expect them. For any residents using the home test kits and needing an isolation letter or release to return to work, please email us at release@rc.mt.gov. Be sure to include name, date of birth and contact number.

Montana Department of Health and Human Services is seeing an increase in Omicron. The past few days more than 80% of the specimens at the state lab, have been sequenced as Omicron, indicating it is widely circulating in Montana.

A reminder to residents regarding the recent updated guidance. The CDC has shortened the length of isolation time for persons with no symptoms or those with mild symptoms to focus on the period when a person is most infectious. Residents are asked to stay home and isolate for a minimum 5 days, regardless of vaccination status. A person with no fever, improvement of symptoms or no symptoms at all, can safely leave the house on day 6. The recommendation is to continue to wear a mask for the next 5 days (day 6-10). With the shortened isolation and quarantine guidelines it is critical that people continue masking and taking additional precaution for the remaining 5 days. (Day 6-10)

The updated guidance was made due to new studies that show infectiousness is highest, one day before symptoms begin and declines within a week of symptoms starting. The average infectious period and risk for transmission is between 2-3 days before and 8 days after symptoms begin. More information can be found @ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation-background.html>

Public Health recommends getting vaccinated and boosted as a best practice. Residents are encourage to make precautions a part of everyday living.

- Wash hands frequently, use hand sanitizer.
- Physically distance whenever possible.
- Masking when appropriate.
- Use home test kits as decision making tool.
- Improve ventilation whenever possible.
- Stay home when sick.

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