

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 1/19/2022**

## **RAVALLI COUNTY COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE**

Hamilton, Mont... Reported COVID case counts have jumped significantly over the weekend. As of 2pm today 347 cases are active with some 80 plus cases still waiting for review. Public Health also had several phone messages from the holiday weekend wanting to report positive home tests. At this time we encourage residents that would like to report positive results to fill out the “tracing” form found on the Public Health website. Residents can also find the isolation recommendations, exposure recommendations and instructions for filling out the tracing form. The form, along with any questions, can be emailed to Public Health at [rcpublichealth@rc.mt.gov](mailto:rcpublichealth@rc.mt.gov).

Public Health is also receiving numerous calls requesting home testing kits. We are aware that home testing kits are difficult to obtain and sold out at many locations. Public Health does not have home testing kits available. Supplies are on back order all over the state. Information regarding online ordering of free home testing kits came out yesterday. Residents can order their free test kits from the following link <https://www.covidtests.gov/>.

Public Health would like to make the community aware, with the number of cases being reported daily and the new shortened isolation recommendation, staff are not able to contact trace every reported positive in a timely manner. Public Health has reached capacity and has begun prioritizing contact tracing on children in school or attending daycare and individuals living or working in healthcare or congregate settings (long term care or group homes). Most residents, with a reported positive case, that do not receive a phone call, can expect a letter with isolation recommendations. The same letter is posted on the Ravalli County Public Health website, titled “Isolation Recommendations”. Public Health is happy to answer questions residents may have about isolation, exposure, quarantine or vaccination. Residents can call the office or email at the above address.

Public Health continues to recommend the following as a best practice.

- Vaccination. Vaccine has been shown safe and effective at reducing severe outcomes.
- Masking when appropriate: 5 days following isolation, 10 days following an exposure, or in poorly ventilated public areas that don't allow for physical distancing.
- Maintain physical distancing whenever possible
- Frequent handwashing and sanitizing
- Testing when appropriate: with signs and symptoms or as a tool for attending gatherings or visiting loved ones.
- Staying home when sick. Always cover coughs and sneezes.

For more information on COVID in Montana visit the Montana state dashboard at <https://covid19.mt.gov/>. Stay healthy, Ravalli County.

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