

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2/1/2022

RAVALLI COUNTY COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Hamilton, MT...Ravalli County Public Health is opting to follow the lead of the State of Montana and other county health officials in moving away from universal contact tracing during this current COVID-19 Omicron spike. Like many other counties, Ravalli County Public Health is looking to transition away from phone calls to automated texted surveys. The surveys are compliant with the HIPPA health information privacy laws and are intended for the purpose of tracking time to illness onset, type and duration of symptoms, and any exposures in vulnerable settings. More information will be coming as we finish development of this process. In the meantime, residents can continue to expect phone calls and isolation letters in the mail.

The decision to move away from universal contact tracing was based on many factors. The latest variant has evolved to move more quickly through people with minimal or no symptoms. The highest risk of transmission usually occurs before individuals show signs or symptoms of infection. With the shortened isolation period, many individuals are through their isolation period before Public Health is able to make contact. Many individuals are utilizing the home testing option and do not routinely report positives to Public Health. Most importantly, current information has shown vaccinated individuals are less likely to have severe outcomes.

CDC guidance on isolation and quarantine for COVID-19 has not changed. We will continue to monitor the pandemic and trace contacts in certain high risk settings. Public Health will continue to be available to give guidance to organizations, answer individual questions, and provide work or school releases when requested. To request a release of isolation from Public Health please email us at rpublichealth@rc.mt.gov. Please include your name, date of birth, contact number and the date your symptoms began.

Public Health continues to encourage residents to consider getting vaccinated. Current data shows the vaccine to be safe and effective. Ravalli County is holding at 50 % of the residents vaccinated with another 6% partially vaccinated. More information about our county can be found at <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/CoronavirusMT/index>.

Vaccine is available every Tuesday from 9 am to 4pm. Public Health is also offering mobile off-site services for homebound or businesses that would like to offer vaccination to staff on-site. If interested call 406-830-0066 to schedule.

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