JOSEPHINE COUNTY

Public Health

715 NW Dimmick Street
Grants Pass, OR 97526
Phone: (541) 474-5325
Fax: (541) 474-5353
https://co.josephine.or.us/COVID19

8:00 am – 6:00 pm M-Th
  (Closed 12-12:30 for lunch)

8:00 am – 12:00 pm Fri

WIC: 8:00 am-5:45 pm M-Th
  (Closed for lunch 12:00 - 1:00 pm)
8:00 - 11:45 am Fri

WIC Wolf Creek: 9:30 am - 4:00 pm
  (Every 1st Wednesday of the month)

WIC Cave Junction: 9:30 am - 4:00 pm
  (Every 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month)

How to prevent Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Wash your hands.
Wash thoroughly and often. Use soap and warm water.

Don't touch your face.
Not as easy as it sounds, but it's important to keep viruses from getting into your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Sick? Stay home.
And get plenty of rest.

Cover your cough.
Make sure to cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow.

People who think they might have been exposed to COVID-19 should CALL their local primary care provider or urgent care.

If you are in need of IMMEDIATE medical assistance, call 9-1-1.

COVID-19 CURRENT STATUS AS OF April 3, 2020

It Takes a Community: Social Distancing

Social distancing. By now, we generally know what it means and that it has recently played a part in drastically changing our daily lifestyles. We've seen birthday songs sung from the street with family and friends standing 6 feet apart, messages scrawled on signs and held up to windows for isolated family members, bands playing together from their own balconies, and video chat…a lot of video chat.

Humans are generally social. We rely on each other for support and we have the need to feel connected. This need for social interaction is why social distancing is such a challenge! But for social distancing efforts to truly work in the fight against COVID-19, everyone has to participate. It's when community interventions such as the closure of public agencies, buildings, schools, libraries, and events further support the shared goal of creating distance between individuals that we start seeing a greater reduction in the spread of COVID-19. Together, we must prioritize the protection of the health of our residents and those who are especially vulnerable.

We need your help! Together, we can make a difference by committing to social distancing and other responsible behaviors as we respond to COVID-19.

Working Together
Community Partners and the Role They Play In a Pandemic

Communities are a group of individuals and organizations that share a general geographical location and together interact to create a social and economic network. Every day communities are working together at some level — so how does this really change in a pandemic?

Pandemics can place extraordinary demands on public health, healthcare systems, and essential community services. That means it is even more important in a pandemic that we remain focused on working together to accomplish a shared goal. Sharing our resources, our time, and our energy maximizes our efforts for a more significant outcome.

For businesses, this often means joining forces to share resources, knowledge, and services that may be in short supply. Often, special groups of skilled individuals from multiple organizations are created that work together on a single task for the good of the larger community.

For individuals, it may include adjusting daily routines, reducing unnecessary reliance on resources that are in high demand, volunteering time, or even donating items to contribute to available community resources.

Josephine County Public Health is one of nine agencies (and growing) that have dedicated staff members to the COVID-19 Incident Response Team. This group of first responders, medical professionals, and other experts in their fields have come together to unify their efforts in response to the increased needs our community faces due to COVID-19.

With Public Health and Emergency Management leading the way, the team continuously assess the greatest needs of our community and then works together to find and implement solutions.

"COVID-19 is a community problem, and the IRT is our community's way to come together and slow the spread of this disease," said Mike Weber. "Our task is to ensure our citizens and our health care infrastructure are prepared to deal with the realities of this event. And the key to our success is interagency communication and cooperation."

But beyond the actions of this group, you too can play an important part by practicing social distancing and by listening for announcements made by the county's IRT on ways that you can help, such as donating much needed equipment or supplies.

To find ways you can help: **RogueValley.Recovers.org** or **www.serv-or.org**

	United States	Oregon	Josephine County
Total Cases	239,279	899	12
Number of Deaths	5,443	22	0

To Mask or Not to Mask

For such a small object, masks really become a big topic of discussion in a pandemic. One question on everyone's mind is: "Do they help you stay well?" Another important question is: What is the difference between medical masks and homemade (e.g. fabric) masks? **ANSWER—Medical masks are manufactured to specific standards, and tested. Fabric masks are not standardized nor tested, and the wide variance in fabric weave along with effects of dyes can change any protection fabric masks MIGHT provide**.

Years of study have shown that in everyday life situations, wearing a mask will do little to stop the spread of viruses when worn by healthy individuals completing routine daily tasks. However, a normal mask worn by someone who is sick can help keep droplets containing the virus from getting into the air when the sick individual coughs or sneezes. So yes, when a sick individual wears a mask it can help keep the virus from spreading. This is best shown with medical masks. Fabric masks appear to have marginal benefit at most.

Another important question with COVID-19 has to do with identifying when you are "sick" enough to be contagious. Because we now know that COVID-19 can be spread by people who are unaware that they carry the virus, the question about masks is again relevant. As it is impossible to identify all carriers of the disease when in a public setting, Social distancing is still the most effective way to avoid the virus.

Healthcare professionals often wear a medical mask when treating patients. Because they must be in close proximity to their patients in order to provide adequate care, the mask helps to keep droplets from a patient's potential cough or sneeze from entering the healthcare worker's nose and mouth when they are in close contact with an individual that may be ill but may not be showing symptoms. Additionally, if a patient is showing symptoms, they will most likely be asked to also wear a mask for extra protection against the spread of the virus. In addition to a mask, healthcare professionals often wear goggles or a face shield to protect their eyes from droplets as well.

In recent weeks, we've started seeing a lot of unique homemade fabric mask designs. This creativity and ingenuity is largely driven by the insufficient supply of medical masks due to the rapid spread of COVID-19. To date there hasn't been a lot of research done to demonstrate the effectiveness of fabric masks. The biggest benefit may be that wearing a fabric mask may help to keep the wearer from touching their face. Fabric masks might stop some spread of droplets, particularly large droplets, but there have not been sufficient studies to prove the level of protection, if any, they provide.

Should you decide to wear a fabric mask for the possibility of limited protection, here are some items to consider:

- At this time, there is no consensus on the effectiveness of fabric masks. Additionally, there are no officially recommended patterns for masks. Additional studies on effectiveness would be needed to do so.
- Unless fabric masks are washed thoroughly and frequently, they can become a collection point for viruses and a breeding ground for bacteria. Make sure to wash it often, do not share masks, and never wear a previously worn mask without washing it first.
- Make sure you can still breathe easily through the mask.
- Masks must fit snuggly around your face in order to keep droplets from getting behind the mask.
- To prevent infecting yourself, your hands need to be clean before putting on a mask. Make sure to wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before touching a clean mask. And DO NOT reach behind the mask to touch your face. After all, that simply provides another opportunity for the virus to get behind the mask, and any virus you may have to get to other surfaces by your touch.

MOST IMPORTANTLY! Wearing a mask does NOT substitute for maintaining physical distancing as currently recommended. Physical distancing appears to work better at reducing disease transmission.

What's in a Test

We often receive questions about COVID-19 testing. These questions generally focus on the current availability of tests and how or when providers decide who is tested.

Featured in a recent "Facebook Live" with Dr. Candelaria and Anthony Perry, "Dr. C." answered this question well. As he pointed out to viewers, once someone is sick, testing does not change the course of treatment for COVID-19. There are currently no effective treatments, cures, or vaccine for the virus. Regardless of the test results, if a patient displays symptoms consistent with that of COVID-19, their provider will ask that they self-isolate at home until their symptoms improve. Should their symptoms worsen and become severe, hospital supportive care may be necessary. The need for supportive care may also occur for individuals who test negative for COVID-19 but positive for influenza or another respiratory illness.

Simply put, being tested for COVID-19 provides only one thing: confirmation. It will tell you if your symptoms are COVID-19 or some other respiratory illness. Currently, it will not change the course of treatment the patient will receive. And a large portion of patients who test positive COVID-19 will not need to seek hospital supportive care to improve. However, if you believe that you may have COVID-19, influenza or any other respiratory illness, please make sure to self-isolate and avoid exposing vulnerable populations to the illness.