

CORONAVIRUS – COVID19

YKHC OFFICIAL ADVISORY — APRIL 26, 2021

Community Lockdown Advisory Update

Our region's vulnerability to COVID-19 is significantly higher than many places in the state due to transportation challenges, limited healthcare infrastructure, limited access to running water and sewer, and multi-generational housing. Consequently, even with no active cases in the YK Delta, YKHC continues to recommend communities implement mitigation factors to protect from the transmission of COVID-19.

YKHC has put the following framework together to help identify when it would be safe to begin lifting communitywide restrictions. The following is based on recommendations from the State, CDC, availability of vaccines and stakeholder feedback.

Indicators of Community Transmission:

The CDC recommends two measures to assess the risk of transmission— for a period of the past 7 days both the total number of new cases and the percentage of positive tests should be considered. YKHC's recommendations incorporates those measures, as well as additional factors based on feedback from stakeholders.

Indicators and Thresholds for Community Transmission of COVID-19				
Indicator	Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Aniak Sub-Region Cases in Past 7 days	0	1	2	≥3
Bethel Sub-Region Cases in Past 7 days	1	2-7	8-13	≥14
Emmonak Sub-Region Cases in Past 7 days	0	1	2	≥3
Hooper Bay Sub-Region Cases in Past 7 days	0	1	2	≥3
St. Mary's Sub-Region Cases in Past 7 days	0	1	2	≥3
Toksook Bay Sub-Region Cases in Past 7 days	0	1	2	≥3
Percentage of positive tests during the past 7 days	<3%	3.0-3.9%	4.0%-4.9%	≥5%
Percentage of eligible population that has been vaccinated	≥50%	30%-50%	10%-30%	<10%

Contact Tracing of Local Cases Linked to Travel: Each individual community should go two weeks without any cases that are not clearly linked to travel. This period reflects one full disease cycle, and helps ensure the virus has not spread in the community.

Sub-Regions:

Sub regions are defined by the five Sub-regional Clinic Service areas. The remaining villages fall into the Bethel area. Appendix 1 identifies these areas

Mitigation Strategies:

Another essential step towards reopening communities is ensuring mitigation strategies are in place. YKHC recommends that all of the following be in place before lifting lockdown restrictions.

Masks: Masks should be worn anytime you are around someone not from your household or social circle. The most effective masks are surgical masks or triple layered cloth masks. Loose fitting masks, woven fabrics, or masks with exhalation valves or vents should be discouraged.

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Physical distancing: Physical distance of at least six feet between people should be maintained at all times. This is a minimum, more is better.

Quarantine: Anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 or traveled within the last 14 days should quarantine. If quarantining because the individual was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, and they are unable to separate from other household members, the entire household should quarantine. When quarantining due to travel, only the traveler needs to quarantine.

YKHC and the State of Alaska endorse two options for shortened quarantine. Option 1 is a 7-day quarantine with negative test on day 6 and day 7. Option 2 is a 10-day quarantine with no test required. The earliest a person could return to work with two negative tests would be on day 8 following their last day of exposure, or day 11 with no test.

Anyone who develops symptoms within 14 days of an exposure (regardless of whether or not they remain in quarantine) should immediately self-isolate and seek additional testing. Persons can continue to quarantine for 14 days per existing CDC recommendations. The full 14-day quarantine period is also recommended for unvaccinated workers in a communal living and crowded work setting, check with your employer for further guidance. Local communities may decide to continue a 14-day quarantine for residents. Local travel or quarantine restrictions must still be followed. As communities begin lifting restrictions, they should begin with fully vaccinated people.

Quarantine for Vaccinated Persons: YKHC does not recommend quarantine for vaccinated persons due to recent travel or exposure to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 provided they meet the following criteria:

1. They are fully vaccinated. People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after getting the second shot of Pfizer or Moderna or one week after getting the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
2. Have remained asymptomatic since the exposure.

Note that targeted testing will still be performed for any exposed person in accordance with YKHC guidance.

Vaccines: Vaccines are a powerful tool for preventing COVID-19 infections. Vaccines not only protect the individual who was vaccinated from serious infection and death, but those around them as well. As the percentage of people who are vaccinated increases, it becomes harder for the disease to spread from person to person, protecting those who cannot be vaccinated. This is often referred to as herd protection. It is very important that every eligible person (age 16 and over) be vaccinated as quickly as possible.

To request a vaccination appointment, regardless of whether you live in Bethel or a village, please submit a vaccine application online at <https://tinyurl.com/y7reeyst>. Residents without internet can call OEH at 800-478-6599 or 543-6420 Monday–Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to answer the survey questions and place you on the scheduling list.

Social Circle: Widespread community transmission is still occurring throughout the region. In-person contact and social circles should be kept as small as possible. In high transmission levels, this means just your own household. As levels drop, individuals can slowly expand their circle to include others outside your household. New members of your circle should agree to stay at least 6 feet away from others outside the circle and wear masks. As you consider expanding your circle, adding fully vaccinated individuals is the safest group to start with. Please remember that even at low transmission levels you should be able to name everyone you have been around the last two weeks.

Special Considerations for Gatherings of Vaccinated Persons: Small indoor gatherings between fully vaccinated individuals (10 people or less) can be performed without masks and physical distancing. Indoor visits between fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people can be performed if the unvaccinated individuals are at low risk for severe COVID-19 and the social circle is limited to one additional household. Medium to large sized gatherings (greater than 10 individuals) should be avoided. This guidance will be updated and expanded based on the level of community spread of SARS-CoV-2, the proportion of the population that is fully vaccinated, and the rapidly evolving science on COVID-19 vaccines.

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In public spaces including gyms and workspaces, fully vaccinated people should continue to follow guidance to protect themselves and others, including wearing a well-fitted mask, physical distancing (at least 6 feet), avoiding crowds, avoiding poorly ventilated spaces, covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands often.

Testing: YKHC recommends everyone participate in weekly screening tests to help identify cases early and minimize secondary transmission. When regional transmission rates are moderate or high, communities should test at least 10% of the population each week. To support this effort, YKHC offers testing for anyone who is seen at a YKHC facility for any reason, or who has been exposed to someone known to be infected with COVID-19.

Ventilation: COVID 19 spreads between people more readily indoors than outdoors. When indoors, ventilation strategies help offset the absence of wind and reduce the concentration of virus in the air. There are a number of ways to replace inside air with fresh outdoor air. When using mechanical ventilation, open outdoor air dampers to reduce or eliminate HVAC air recirculation. If an HVAC ventilation system is not available, opening windows can increase the amount of outside air circulating in a room. Use of portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration systems help enhance air cleaning in some high risk areas.

Lockdown Recommendations				
	Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Mitigation Strategies	Universal and correct use of masks is required. In addition, implementation of other key mitigation strategies such as handwashing, respiratory etiquette, cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities; contact tracing, diagnostic testing in combination with quarantine should occur. This includes limiting the number of people in the post office, grocery store, washeteria and other public areas			
Lockdown Restrictions	Community gatherings can occur inside with masks and 6 feet separation from anyone outside your social circle.	Indoor gatherings of 10 and under can take place with masks and 6 feet separation between non- household members at all times.	All gatherings should be outdoors with 10 or fewer people. Masks and 6 feet separation between non-household members at all times.	Communities should consider local lockdown restrictions. Close non-essential businesses where possible. Essential workers should be put on rotating shifts.
Community Based Activities	Staff teleworking can consider returning to work, but are required to wear masks and maintain physical distancing. A limited (less than 25) number of attendees at events come from outside the local geographic area.	No food is served. Common areas are closed. Most staff telework. Staff present in a facility are required to wear masks and maintain physical distance of more than 6 feet where possible.	If staff or stakeholders are present in a facility, they are required to wear masks and maintain physical distance of more than 6 feet where possible.	Meetings and other activities are conducted virtually. Only essential activities (i.e., provision of essential services) occur in person.
Social Circles	Social circles can be expanded. You should be able to name everyone you have been around the last two weeks.	Social circles can be expanded to include vaccinated friends and family outside your household.	Small gatherings with friends and family occur only if they can be held outdoors, with masks and physical distancing of 6 feet or more required.	Gatherings outside household are virtual only
Travel	Out-of-region travel to areas with low transmission levels can be considered. Limit interactions to a small number of friends and family.	Travel to neighboring communities with low transmission levels can be considered. Limit interactions to a small number of friends and family.	Travel should be limited to essential medical appointments or critical infrastructure workers	
Travelers should quarantine for 10 days upon returning unless fully vaccinated. All travelers should test 7 days after travel.				