

CORONAVIRUS – COVID19

YKHC OFFICIAL ADVISORY — March 11, 2022

Community Advisory Update

*Separate guidance for schools is included in the YKHC Recommendation for Schools. YKHC guidance for safe-in person learning at schools may differ based on variables specific to the school setting. The most updated recommendations for schools are posted on YKHC's website at: <https://www.ykhc.org/covid-19/resources/>

The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta'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.

While vaccination remains our strongest tool for protecting people from getting seriously ill or becoming hospitalized with COVID-19, YKHC recommends communities continue to implement protective measures that help to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Based on stakeholder feedback, and recommendations from the State, and the CDC, YKHC has put the following framework together to help identify when to implement these mitigation activities. This guidance takes in account rates of transmission in the community as well as hospital capacity, and may change with future variants.

Regardless of a community's particular risk level, YKHC urges all individuals to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and to continue practicing certain protective health recommendations at all times as identified below.

Assessing community risk level of COVID-19 transmission:

The CDC and YKHC use three primary measures to assess, or calculate, the risk of transmission in a particular [area](#):

1. The total number of new cases over the past 7 days
2. The number of new hospitalizations for COVID-19 in the previous 7 days
3. Percentage of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7-day average)

The following table is a tool that can be used to determine the area's current risk level.

COVID-19 Community Levels — Use the highest level that applies to your community				
New COVID-19 cases in the region in the past 7 days	Indicators	Low	Medium	High
Fewer than 50	New COVID-19 admissions (7 day total)	<2	3-5	≥6
	Percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7 day average)	<10.0%	10.0-14.9%	≥15.0%
50 or more	New COVID-19 admissions (7 day total)	NA	3-5	≥6
	Percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7 day average)	NA	<10.0%	≥10.0%

Guidance for Both Vaccinated and Unvaccinated People

Whether or not certain activities can be performed safely depends on four factors: (1) if a person is vaccinated and boosted, (2) the transmission rate of COVID-19 in the community, (3) the size and location of the gathering, and (4) duration of exposure. Small gatherings are safer than large gatherings (typically more than 10 people). Outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities, especially in areas with poor ventilation.

Prevention strategies may vary based on the level of risk in the community which includes both the number and

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severity of cases. At all levels, individuals should stay up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations including getting a booster when eligible; maintain improved ventilation in public indoor spaces; and following testing and quarantine/isolation guidance.

At medium risk, implement screening testing at workplaces, schools, or other community settings. Individuals and communities may choose additional measures to protect people at high risk for severe illness or death, such as wearing a well-fitting mask outside your household, or self-testing to detect infection before gathering with persons at high risk for severe disease.

If a community is experiencing high transmission, YKHC recommends the immediate implementation of communitywide strategies that reduce the spread of COVID-19, including but not limited to: universal masking, avoiding or rescheduling large gatherings, social distancing, and expanded testing.

Since hospitalizations and deaths often follow outbreaks, communities, businesses, and individuals may also consider implementing these strategies in response to a known or suspected outbreak regardless of current hospitalization rates in an effort to suppress the outbreak.

The following strategies are also encouraged regardless of the COVID-19 Community Level the region is in.

1) Testing:

Testing may be utilized in a variety of situations such as:

- If you have COVID-19 symptoms
- If you have been exposed or potentially exposed to an individual with COVID-19.
- Before and after gathering indoors with others.
- Before travel or high-risk activities like attending large gatherings or participating in contact sports
- 5 days after travel or high-risk activities

Testing can give you information about the risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. This is especially important when in contact with unvaccinated children, older individuals, those who are immunocompromised, or individuals at risk of severe disease.

A positive test result indicates that you likely have a current infection, and you should isolate and inform close contacts.

A negative test result indicates that you may not be infected and may be at low risk of spreading disease to others, but it does not rule out an infection. Performing serial tests, meaning two or more tests over several days with at least 24 hours between tests improves the reliability of testing and reduces your risk of transmitting disease to others even further. Some self-tests require this type of repeat testing in the manufacturer's instructions.

2) Isolating After a Positive Test

Isolation is used to separate people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 from those without COVID-19. People who are confirmed to have COVID-19 or are showing symptoms of COVID-19 need to isolate regardless of their vaccination status.

This includes:

- People who have a [positive viral test](#) for COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they have [symptoms](#).
- People with [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, including people who are awaiting test results or have not been tested. People with symptoms should isolate even if they do not know if they have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19.

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People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others, typically 10 days. At home, anyone sick or infected should separate from others, or wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when they need to be around others. Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings. People in isolation should stay in a specific "sick room" or area and use a separate bathroom if available.

Isolation can be discontinued after day 5 with a negative Antigen test (BinaxNow, Quickvue, SOFIA, etc.) if symptoms are resolving and fever has resolved for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medications). If isolation is ended after 5 days, a well-fitting mask should be worn when around others both at home and in public for an additional 5 days.

If you do not have a negative antigen test, are unable to wear a mask when around others, continue to have fever, or your other symptoms have not improved, you should continue to isolate for a full 10 days or until the above conditions are met.

3) Quarantine After Contact with Someone with COVID-19

If you have any COVID-19 symptoms: Anyone who develops symptoms within 14 days of an exposure (regardless of vaccination status) should immediately self-isolate and seek testing. Local communities may decide to continue a 14-day quarantine for residents. Local travel or quarantine restrictions must still be followed. All persons should check with their local government and employer for further guidance.

If you do not have symptoms: Quarantine recommendations for people without symptoms vary based on if you live with the person who is COVID-positive and if you are up-to-date with your vaccination status. "Up-to-date" with your vaccinations means you have completed your primary series AND have received a booster or got your last dose of Pfizer or Moderna less than five months ago (or J&J less than two months ago) or are under age 12.

If you have no symptoms and are NOT up-to-date with your vaccinations, according to the definition above, regardless of if you live with the person who is positive:

You should quarantine at home and away from other people for 10 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19. Quarantine can end after day 5 with a negative COVID-19 test. The test should be performed on the last day of quarantine.

The date of your exposure is considered day 0. Individuals with ongoing contact, such as people living with household members who are COVID-19 positive are exposed every day until that person is cleared from isolation. Every day you are exposed, you must restart at 0.

If you have no symptoms and ARE up-to-date with vaccinations and LIVE WITH the person who has COVID-19:

YKHC recommends you quarantine for the same length of time the person who tested positive is in isolation. COVID-19 testing should occur on Day 1, followed by repeat testing on Day 5, and the end of quarantine.

Continue to wear a well-fitting mask when around others at home and in public, and monitor for symptoms like fever, cough, shortness of breath for 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19. You should also stay away from places you would remove a mask like restaurants and gyms, avoid eating around others, and avoid close contact with people at a high risk for severe COVID-19 infection during this time. If you test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms, isolate from other people and follow recommendations in the [Isolation](#) section above.

If you live with the person who is positive but are able to physically separate from the person for their entire isolation period (such that the sick person can stay in their own room for the entire isolation period), you may follow the guideline below, as if you do not live with the sick person.

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If you have no symptoms and ARE up-to-date with vaccinations and DO NOT LIVE WITH the person who has COVID-19:

You should wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others. [Get tested](#) at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0). If you do not develop symptoms and your test is negative you can leave isolation.

Continue to wear a well-fitting mask when around others at home and in public, and monitor for symptoms like fever, cough, shortness of breath for 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19. You should also stay away from places you would remove a mask like restaurants and gyms, avoid eating around others, and avoid close contact with people at a high risk for severe COVID-19 infection during this time. If you test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms, isolate from other people and follow recommendations in the [Isolation](#) section above.

Have questions?

If you would like additional guidance for yourself or your community, please reach out to YKHC.