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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **COVID-19 Updates**

**[Medford, Oregon]** — The holidays are here, and so is a new COVID-19 variant called Omicron. Viruses are constantly changing, including the virus that causes COVID-19. New variants of the virus are expected, but we have the tools to slow the emergence of new variants, fight the Omicron variant, and celebrate the holidays safely with family and friends.

Holiday traditions are important for families and children. There are several ways to enjoy holiday traditions and protect your health. Because many generations tend to gather to celebrate holidays, the best way to minimize COVID-19 risk and keep your family and friends safer is to get vaccinated if you're eligible.

If you plan on being around groups of people over the holidays, the best thing you can do is get the COVID-19 vaccine or get your booster shot. "Last holiday season, the COVID-19 vaccine was just released, so to have such a safe and effective vaccine available this year to keep us healthy and safe is a relief," states Tanya Phillips, Health Promotion Manager for Jackson County Public Health. It typically takes two weeks after vaccination for the body to build protection (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19.

It is important to add layers of protection on top of getting vaccinated. Not every tool we have to fight the pandemic is perfect; adding layers will provide additional protection and help slow the spread. This includes wearing a mask in public indoor spaces, avoiding poorly ventilated spaces, getting tested, if you are sick or have symptoms do not host or attend gatherings, and washing your hands frequently. It is also best to delay travel until you are able to be fully vaccinated.

If you are traveling for the holidays, be sure to check the requirements for travel, as they can quickly change to adapt to the pandemic. Check the Centers for Disease Control [Travel](#) website for more information.

### **Where to get vaccinated in Jackson County:**

Call 211 for information for vaccine locations, visit the Oregon Health Authority Vaccine Finder site <https://govstatus.egov.com/find-covid-19-vaccine> or visit the Jackson County Health and Human Services <https://jacksoncountyor.org/hhs/COVID-19/Vaccine-Appointments/where-to-get-vaccinated-in-jackson-county>.

**Daily Number of New COVID-19 Cases**

As of 12:01 a.m. on December 23, 2021, Jackson County Public Health is reporting 104 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the total cases in Jackson County to 26,044.

**COVID-19 Hospitalizations for Region 5 (Jackson and Josephine Counties)**

As of 8:30 a.m. on December 23, 2021, the number of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 is 49, and there are 15 patients with COVID-19 in the intensive care unit.

The total number of patients in hospital beds may fluctuate between report times. The numbers do not reflect admissions per day nor the length of hospital stay. Staffing limitations are not captured in this data and may further limit bed capacity.

**For more information:**

- The public can call 211-information with general questions
- OHA Emerging Respiratory Disease page: [www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus](http://www.healthoregon.org/coronavirus)
- CDC COVID-19 page: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)
- OHA COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://govstatus.egov.com/or-oha-covid-vaccine>
- CDC COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>
- Jackson County HHS Vaccine: <https://jacksoncountyor.org/hhs/COVID-19/COVID-19-News/covid-19-vaccine>
- CDC Travel within the U.S.: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>
- Jackson County Health and Human Services: <http://jacksoncountyor.org/hhs/COVID-19>
- Oregon COVID-19 Testing Location Finder: <https://govstatus.egov.com/or-oha-covid-19-testing>

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