Update on COVID-19 Cases in Jackson County

As of May 23, 2020, there has been a total of 57 COVID-19 cases reported to Jackson County Public Health. There were three new cases announced on May 22, 2020, and an additional two cases on May 23, 2020.

At this time, there are no fatalities from COVID-19 reported in Jackson County. To access additional data on the total COVID-19 cases, visit the Situation in Jackson County, Oregon webpage.

Health Advisory Notice: Notice re Antibody Testing for COVID-19

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) released a Health Advisory Note regarding the increased use of antibody testing for COVID-19. The notice states that antibody testing is not recommended for diagnosis or exclusion of COVID-19. Molecular testing (e.g., PCR) is necessary to confirm COVID-19. It usually takes about 14 days after symptom onset for antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 to be detectable by serologic assays, but in most people, the illness and contagious period are likely over by 14 days after symptom onset.

Serology has limited utility in the care of patients who may have COVID-19, but it may be useful for epidemiologic studies. OHA has begun a SARS-CoV-2 seroprevalence study to determine population prevalence of antibodies in Oregon based on sampling across the state.

Healthcare providers and health systems who decide to use antibody testing should understand the limitations of the tests and explain the limitations to patients.

- Antibody tests cannot reliably diagnose or rule out active COVID-19.
- Whether antibodies confer or indicate full or partial immunity to COVID-19 remains unknown.
- Cross-reactivity with other coronaviruses may be a concern with some assays. Check the performance data from the manufacturer of any test you plan to use.
- If antibody prevalence in the population is very low, or the specificity of the assay is not very high, a positive serology test may be more likely to be a false positive than a true positive.
- FDA has published a comparison of selected antibody test performance, including estimates of positive predictive value—i.e., the likelihood that a positive test represents a true positive.
OHA recommends using only tests that have FDA approval or Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). As of today, the FDA has granted EUAs for 12 serology tests. Note that EUA is an expedited vetting process that involves a much lower level of FDA review than does FDA approval. The up-to-date list is available here.²

Health care providers should continue to report all cases of COVID-19, including positive results on molecular and serology tests, to local public health.

OHA’s Public Health Division is tracking all serology test lab reports—positive and negative. However, note that positive serology test results are not included in either the “confirmed” or “presumptive” case definitions for COVID-19. Patients who have only a positive antibody test will not be included in COVID-19 case counts. Public health is not following up on positive serology results.

**Oregon Health Authority: Public Health Indicators Dashboard**

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Local Public Health Authorities in Oregon are monitoring six indicators that measure the health burden of COVID-19 and the capacity of counties to respond. Together, these are the health signs that OHA considers when making a recommendation about counties reopening or stopping, watching, and redirecting. These indicators do overlap with some of the Governor’s Reopening Criteria and they are only one part of the larger framework.

Public Health Indicators for Monitoring COVID-19 in Oregon Counties:
1. Percent of Emergency Department COVID-19-like illness is below 1.5%
2. Percent of tests that result in positives does not trend up in the last 7 days
3. New cases do not increase more than 5% in the last 7 days
4. New cases not traced to a known source is below 30% for the last 7 days
5. COVID-19 hospital admissions decline over the last 14 days
6. Follow-up initiated within 24 hours for 95% or more of cases in the last 7 days

The OHA is now publishing data on the six indicators for each county in Oregon. This information can be found on the OHA’s website, titled Public Health Indicators Dashboard. The data on this dashboard is updated each Thursday of the week.

*The mission of Jackson County Health and Human Services is to plan, coordinate and provide public services that protect and promote the health and well-being of county residents.*
REFERENCES
