



Media Information:

For immediate release:

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COVID-19 risk rises in Yellowstone County

Billings, MT – The Yellowstone County COVID-19 dashboard stayed green in June and July, indicating that healthcare demand was within normal operations and virus risk was relatively low. Three risk indicators are yellow this week, reflecting need for caution. The county has seen a surge in cases, a spike in the percent of tests showing COVID-19 infection and more COVID-19 cases in the region surrounding Yellowstone County.

The number of new COVID-19 cases in Yellowstone County has doubled in the past two weeks. In the first 11 days of August, Yellowstone County has reported 434 cases of COVID-19 – a daily average of 39 cases. In the entire month of July, the county reported 451 cases – an average of 14 cases a day.

The proportion of Yellowstone County resident tested who were positive for COVID-19 last week was 9.94% – double the percentage four weeks earlier.

The number of cases in young people is especially concerning because schools will be back in session later this month. Forty Yellowstone County residents under age 19 tested positive for the virus last week. Eighteen of those children were under age 10.

Billings Clinic and St. Vincent Healthcare have seen more seriously ill patients. Today, there are 57 people hospitalized with COVID-19 – twice the number from two weeks ago. Thirty-five of those patients are from outside Yellowstone County. Eighteen of the 57 patients are in ICU – more than double the number two weeks ago. Twelve patients are on ventilators, compared with just two patients ventilated two weeks earlier. Both hospitals are busy caring for patients with many types of injuries and illnesses – in addition to COVID-19 patients.

Vaccination is the best protection against COVID-19 illness. If you have concerns about vaccination, discuss them with your healthcare provider and consider getting a safe, effective COVID-19 immunization very soon.

Vaccinations are available to everyone age 12 and older at many local pharmacies, clinics and both Billings hospitals. RiverStone Health will offer these free, walk-in COVID-19 vaccination clinics:

- **Thursday, Aug. 12, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.**, Gardener’s Market, South Park, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson.
- **August 20, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.**, RiverStone Health Lil Anderson Center (four-story building), 123 S. 27th St., Pfizer and J&J.

Additional opportunities for student vaccinations:

- RiverStone Health Immunization Clinic in the four-story building at 123 S. 27th St., offers expanded hours for appointments for all students’ back-to-school vaccinations, including the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccinations are available 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. today, Thursday and Friday and next week, Aug. 16-20. Call **247-3382** for an appointment. All immunizations will still be available after next week, but clinic hours may be more limited.
- RiverStone Health School-Based Clinic at Medicine Crow Middle School will offer sports physicals on **Thursday, Aug. 12**, from 1 to 5 p.m. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine also will be available. Call **281-8695** for an appointment.

More vaccination information is posted at covid.riverstonehealth.org.

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