

# SPECIAL REPORT



## DOUGLAS COUNTY COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM

### JOINT INFORMATION CENTER PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 4, 2020 DOUGLAS COUNTY COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM – SPECIAL REPORT!

(Douglas County, Ore.) There is a term we should all be familiar with, **COVID-RISK**. While everyone should be familiar with COVID, the super infectious pandemic virus that is sweeping our world, some of you are not familiar with the term **COVID-RISK**...and you should be. Merriam-Webster defines **RISK** as, ‘to expose to a hazard or danger.’ **COVID-RISK** refers to the levels of potential exposure of contracting or spreading the COVID-19 virus as related to your activities. Low risk activities are those that expose you to a minimal risk of getting COVID, while high risk activities are those that most certainly could expose you, your family and your community to the virus. With that said, we wanted to specifically address the relationship between, “*why our cases are on the rise*” and the fact that “**people not heeding our advice about traveling, attending social gatherings and staying home when they are sick.**”

#### FACTS ABOUT COVID-RISK IN DOUGLAS COUNTY!

- ✓ We continue to see COVID-19 cases rise in Douglas County.
- ✓ We continue to see people test positive for COVID-19 that have traveled out of the area, especially out-of-the state.
- ✓ We continue to see people that have contracted the virus infect others, well before they show any actual symptoms.
- ✓ We continue to see people welcome visitors from out of state into their homes that have brought the virus with them.
- ✓ We continue to see people that have been tested for COVID, awaiting results, not isolating themselves.
- ✓ We continue to see people making questionable judgement calls that have resulted in the increase of COVID cases.
- ✓ We continue to remind our residents to limit travel, not attend social gatherings and stay home if you are sick.

If you don’t think the coronavirus can spread like wildfire, here is a case in point. A recent outbreak in our county spiraled out of control, in a matter of days. This outbreak is riddled with choices that allowed the virus to spread. A family member decided to travel from another state with a high level of COVID cases to Douglas County, simply to visit family...there was not an emergency or a life event. The visitor did not self-quarantine for 14 days prior to the visit. Either at home or during their journey the visitor unknowingly contracted the coronavirus. While here, the out of state visitor unknowingly exposed and infected several in their host family with COVID. One member of that family then attended a large social event with 60+ people, who were not wearing face coverings or practicing social distancing, and unknowingly exposed and infected several guests at the event. A guest at the event then had a different family gathering that exposed and infected a few others. Several of those people then went to work and unknowingly exposed and infected their coworkers. Now we have a COVID outbreak in our county that involves several sick families, many people in quarantine and several businesses affected...all related to one ‘innocent’ visit.

#### We believe that we have reached a critical juncture with COVID-19 in Douglas County. If we do not stop the spread now, the virus could potentially wreak havoc and we run the risk of seeing these consequences:

- ✓ Not meeting the matrix criteria for schools to re-open this Fall to in-classroom instruction.
- ✓ Hospitals getting over whelmed, restricting surgeries and limiting access to care.
- ✓ Clinics and medical practices reverting back to limited or no services.
- ✓ Jails releasing or not holding inmates due to overcrowding with COVID guidelines.
- ✓ Businesses and agencies closing their doors again, limiting services and goods.
- ✓ More layoffs and people out of work.

So, how do we stop the spread of COVID-19 in Douglas County? The answer is actually quite simple; we need everyone to make good choices and really stop and think about their activities and the **COVID-RISK** associated with those activities. If we want to turn the tables on spread of this virus in our communities, we need residents to:

- 1) Evaluate the risk before you travel
  - a. Is it necessary that I travel right now or that people travel to see me right now?
  - b. Am I sure that I am not sick? Or that I might make someone in my family sick?
  - c. Am I traveling to a known COVID hot spot? Am I visiting family that could be sick?
  - d. How will I get there? Car, Plane, Train? What safety measures do they have in place?
  - e. How many people will I come in contact with? Will I be in confined spaces with strangers?
  - f. Am I able to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival to my destination?
  - g. Am I able to quarantine for 14 days upon my return home?
  - h. What restrictions are in place at my proposed destination? Do I have to take a test before I go?
  - i. Is it safe to travel right now?
- 2) Limit who you see or visit
  - a. Has the person I’m visiting been exposed to the coronavirus

- b. Did they recently travel out of the area?
- c. Did they self-quarantine going and upon their return?
- d. Are they sick?
- e. Could I unknowingly expose them to the virus?

**3) Ask your family and friends to stay home**

- a. We know it is tough right now, but please ask visitors to stay home.
- b. Find non-contact ways to visit with each other like Facetime, texting, sending or posting photos, writing letters and making phone calls.

**4) Don't attend that social gathering**

- a. Again, we know it is hard, but resist the urge to attend that wedding, birthday party or pool party.

**5) Stay home if you are sick**

- a. Going to work when you feel you are, “*only just a little sick*” could potentially expose others to your illness and cause an unnecessary outbreak.

**6) Access your COVID-RISK and avoid activities that are high risk**

- a. Evaluate your COVID-RISK by using risk index charts like the one below we adapted from doctors from the University of Pennsylvania, George Washington University and the University of Arizona.
- b.

## COVID-19 Risk Index

Risk levels for exposure vary based on four main factors:



### Low



### Low / Medium



### Medium

### Medium / High



### High



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## Reversing the trajectory of COVID-19 cases in our county is really up to YOU, our residents.

Contracting the coronavirus is very preventable. The virus is a hazard to your health and the health of those around you. COVID-19 is dangerous in that you could unwittingly expose someone you love to the virus, potentially infect someone with a compromised immune system or cause someone to get seriously ill or die. Data from CDC and OHA show that traveling and coming into contact with people from other areas, especially COVID-19 hot spots, **DOES** significantly increase your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19. Whatever your reason for traveling, going to work while sick, inviting Aunt Sally to come visit or attending a wedding, we encourage you to please reconsider and access the **COVID-RISK** to you, your family and your community. The COVID-19 virus is still here, still infectious and will be around for quite some time. The bottom line is that each and every person needs to take personal responsibility for their actions and adopt the proper precautionary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In addition to limiting travel, not attending social gatherings and staying home if you are sick, we ask you to please follow these simple daily precautions as well: wash your hands, stay six feet apart and wear a mask where recommended.

## Stay Informed with Local Accurate Information

Stay up to date on COVID-19 in Douglas County on the [Douglas County Government website](#) or the [DPHN website](#). Your Douglas County Board of Commissioners, Douglas County Public Health Officer, Dr. Robert Dannenhoffer and the Douglas County COVID-19 Response Team (DCCRT) have been working hard to cooperatively provide accurate and timely information to Douglas County residents since March 8, 2020. **Our local COVID-19 updates represent the coordinated effort of the agencies that make up the DCCRT.**

## Local COVID-19 Hotline

If you have questions about COVID-19 and available local resources, call the Douglas County COVID-19 Hotline at (541) 464-6550. It is staffed by local volunteers from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, 7 days a week.

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