Press Release

COVID-19 testing update, face masks, scam alerts,

COVID-19 TESTING UPDATE

As of today, there have been at least 39 tests for COVID-19 given in Baker County. 30 tests have returned negative results, and 9 tests are pending results. The term "at least" is used because this information comes from the Oregon State Health Lab, and the counts for negative or pending tests coming from private laboratories may be delayed. Any positive cases, regardless of the lab they are tested in, will be reported immediately.

Testing for COVID-19 can be ordered by a primary health care provider. The Baker County Health Department does not provide tests. Health care providers are using updated guidance from the Oregon Health Authority to determine when a test is needed:

- Persons in the following groups with a fever (greater than 100.4°F), cough or shortness of breath:

    o Over age 60

    o Patients with underlying medical conditions, including, but not limited to hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, lung disease, and immunocompromising conditions

    o Pregnant women

    o Patients with worsening symptoms

    o Healthcare workers or first responders (EMS, public safety workers)

    o Patients who had contact with a suspect or lab-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of their symptom onset

If a patient is evaluated using this but does NOT qualify for testing, they will be given guidance to self-quarantine at home. Depending upon when a test is performed and which lab the test is sent to, it takes an average of 7 days to receive test results. If you become sick with a fever or

cough, isolate yourself at home to help prevent the spread of illness. If you need medical attention, call your healthcare provider before visiting the office to make a plan for treatment.

FACE MASKS

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention released new guidance on the benefits of wearing face masks. While staying home and avoiding all non-essential contact with others continues to be the most important thing all of us can do to stay healthy and keep others healthy, face masks can be beneficial when contact with others cannot be avoided, such as at the grocery store or pharmacy. The CDC advises using simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may unknowingly have the virus from transmitting it to others.

The CDC provided [guidance on making homemade masks](#), including instructions for making sewn and not-sewn masks yourself.

The Oregon Health Authority asks that medical masks be saved for health care workers, who are on the front lines of caring for those with COVID-19. Parents, families and caregivers may be wondering about what age a child should be to safely wear a mask. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children under age 2. It is very important that you never put a mask or face covering on an infant (or an adult) who is not able to adjust or remove the mask themselves. This could compromise their ability to breathe.

Volunteers who want to put their crafting talents to work for the community are invited to donate masks at a drop box at the Community Connection Center at 2810 Cedar Street. Donated masks will be collected, laundered and distributed to community members. As supplies allow, free masks can be picked up at the same site as the curbside assessment clinic at the St. Alphonsus Baker City Valley Medical Building, 3820 17th Street in Baker City. Hours will be the same as for the curbside clinic, which is currently open between noon and 4:00 pm.

Benefits to wearing a mask:

● Some people are contagious before they feel sick and can spread the disease without knowing it.

● Droplets do transmit the disease and using a mask reduces the transmission of droplets from your mouth.

● You are less likely to touch your mouth and nose while wearing a mask.

● Cloth or do-it-yourself masks help keep medical supplies with our healthcare providers who are at higher risk.

● Some data suggests that countries who utilized masks had a decreased rate in transmission.

● By reducing the stigma of wearing masks, people who are sick are more likely to wear them.

COVID-19 RELATED SCAMS ON THE RISE

Throughout the country, there has been an increase in scam-related emails, phone calls and in-person visits particularly in relation to COVID-19.

The [Oregon Department of Justice Financial Fraud and Consumer Protection Section](#) has posted a warning about scams related to payments from the federal government:

- The government will not contact you to ask you to pay anything up front in order to get this money. No fees. No charges. Nothing. Anyone who asks for fees up front is a scammer.
- The government will not contact you to ask for your Social Security number, bank account, or credit card number to confirm your identity. Anyone who asks for this type of information is a scammer.

Remember, if you see something, say something. If you believe that you may have encountered a scammer through any of these methods, you can contact the Baker County Sheriff's Office Dispatch at the non-emergency number 541-523-6415.