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PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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Letter to the Community

Hello Thurston County!

Our COVID-19 transmission rates continue to rise and we are seeing an increased number of COVID-19 outbreaks in Thurston County. Yesterday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) changed the COVID-19 Community Level for Thurston County from Low to Medium due to the 7-day COVID-19 transmission rate increasing to more than 200 cases per 100K population. At this community level there are additional recommendations for people at high risk of severe disease as well as the general public.

People at who are immunocompromised or have [other risk factors for severe disease](#) should consider wearing a mask in public indoor spaces and have a plan for rapid testing if needed (this could be home test kits or access to testing). People who have contact with people who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease should consider testing for COVID-19 before contact and wearing a mask when indoors with them.

Staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations, avoiding poorly ventilated spaces, and testing for COVID-19 when symptomatic or in close contact with someone with COVID-19 during their infectious period, and following CDC recommendations for isolation and quarantine are other key ways to stay safe and prevent spread of COVID-19.

The CDC Community Levels can be accessed here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/community-levels.html>

I also wanted to share the most up to date testing recommendations for people with COVID-19 symptoms. Everyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home and get tested regardless of their vaccination status. The CDC recommends that individuals who test negative for COVID-19 on a rapid antigen test and are symptomatic follow up with PCR testing or a second rapid antigen test 24 to 18 hours later. People who continue to test negative and are not known close contacts of people with COVID-19 should stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without use of fever reducing medications and symptoms have greatly improved.

Those who have been identified as close contacts should follow [Washington State Department of Health Guidance](#) for people who have been exposed to COVID-19 and those in the K-12 setting should follow the guidance in the [Thurston County School Communication Plan](#).

Current CDC Guidance for Individuals in Community Settings can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/diagnostic-testing.html>

The CDC Antigen Testing Algorithm for Community members can be found here:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/antigen_algorithm_final-1.pdf

To obtain additional COVID-19 at home test kits you can access them at <https://www.covid.gov/tests> or
<https://sayyescovidhometest.org/>

Wishing you the best of health,

Dimyana Abdelmalek, MD, MPH
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