



Lewis County Public Health & Social Services

News Release

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7 New COVID-19 Cases Announced in Lewis County

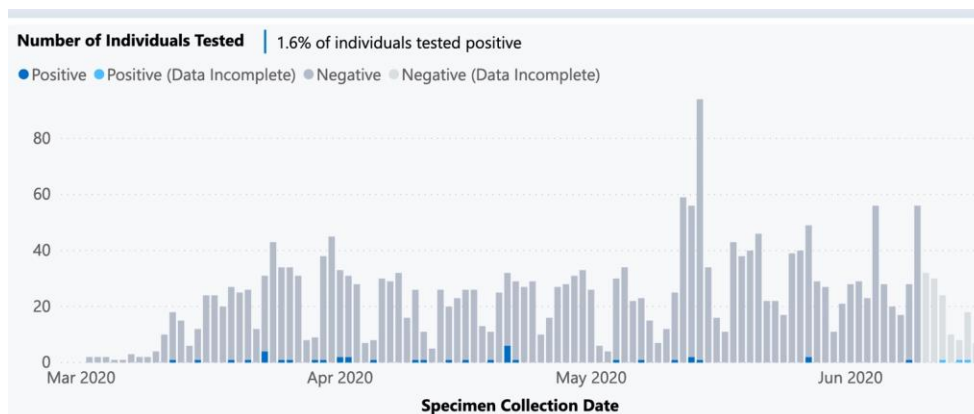
Chehalis, WA – Lewis County Public Health & Social Services (LCPHSS) announced today that seven more county residents have tested positive for COVID-19. This is the largest single-day rise in positive test results and brings the total number of known county residents with positive tests to 48.

Five of the seven are individuals in their 20s, one is in their 60s, and one is in their 80s. One person is hospitalized. Six of the seven live in District 2, one in District 1. Breaking all cases and recoveries to date down by County Commissioner district shows:

	Cases	Recovered
District 1	23	16
District 2.....	17	8
District 3.....	8.....	7

LCPHSS Director J.P. Anderson said the seven new cases do not appear to have been from any single event. “In looking at the testing data, these cases look to be evidence of community transmission. That means the virus is spreading from person to person throughout the county,” he said.

To date there have been 2,543 tests administered in Lewis County, with 48 cases confirmed (1.6% positive). The number of tests per week have been fairly consistent since early April, so this spike in today’s positive tests is not due to increased level of testing, according to Anderson.



Caption: Daily COVID-19 testing in Lewis County has remained fairly constant since early April. The mid-May spike was a congregate center testing event. Source: WA DOH

Health officials are conducting contact tracing investigations with all who test positive. Each patient is educated on how to isolate themselves to reduce the chance of giving the disease to anyone else. They are also asked who else may have been in close contact with them. Those individuals are then contacted to determine their health status. They are also educated on how to quarantine themselves to prevent more spread just in case they did become infected.

“There is a lot of misconceptions about contact tracing,” Lewis County Health Officer Dr. Rachel Wood said. “The truth is, all we want to know is how they are doing, and if they are staying away from others so they don’t spread the disease further.” Dr. Wood said all information is kept confidential. Contacts are not even told who they had been exposed to without express permission from that patient.

Health officials say many healthcare partners in the community are working extremely hard to make sure all patients and contacts are reached in order to limit the spread through community transmission. Talking to an investigator is entirely voluntary and there is no consequence to anyone if they choose not to. However, Dr. Wood urges people to take the calls. “We need every person living in Lewis County to do everything in their power to limit the spread.

Dr. Wood said this jump in cases shows, “It’s never been more important to use all the tools in our toolbox to prevent coronavirus spread in the community.” She said these tools are already known to all and have been proven effective when used. They include staying six feet apart, not touching your face with unwashed hands, cleaning commonly touched surfaces, and wearing a cloth mask when around other people.

Dr. Wood said there is still a great misconception about cloth masks. Cloth masks are not meant to protect the wearer. They function as a barrier to prevent the wearer from spreading the virus to others. People can spread the disease before they even know they have it. Therefore masking is important even when feeling well. She said she is disappointed that mask-wearing has become controversial, adding, “Wearing a mask is not about you. All wearing a mask means is you care for others and your community.”

Health officials remind the community that outbreaks can slow or reverse the process of reopening the county and the local economy. They caution that dropping clear back to earlier Safe Start phases could happen if cases continue to rise because there is still no vaccine or cure for COVID-19.

Dr. Wood said, “I implore everyone to take this seriously. Please use all these preventive measures. You need to protect yourself, your loved ones, and our economy.”

People can stay informed by following the Lewis County COVID-19 web page at covid19.lewiscountywa.gov, @LCPHSS on Twitter, or www.facebook.com/lcphss.

In addition, DOH has a call center to answer questions from the public. If you have questions about what is happening in Washington, how the virus is spread, and what to do if you have symptoms, call 1-800-525-0127 or text 211-211.

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