

**Jefferson County****Public Health**
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Central Oregon Public Health Monthly Update August 25, 2023

A letter from the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator -

What a month it has been...both locally and across the nation. There are no words to describe the devastating wildfires of Maui. I imagine many of you have already looked up ways to help support the community there, but I wanted to make sure you were aware of the [Hawaii Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster \(VOAD\)](#). Hawaii VOAD is responding to this event and cash donations give them the greatest flexibility to serve local needs.

Here at home in Central Oregon, we have been having extreme heat and smoke impacts in recent weeks. After a delayed start to wildfire season, we are beginning to see an increase in wildfires across Oregon with evacuations even taking place in Jefferson County this past week near Lake Billy Chinook.

So what can we do in the face of all this? Let's get prepared for any emergency we may face, whether that be wildfire or another pandemic. September is observed as National Preparedness Month: a time to focus on preparing for disasters and emergencies that could happen at any time. There are tons of resources available with topics ranging from how to make an [emergency "go bag"](#) to [specific health concerns](#) related to events like extreme heat.

For more information on how to get started in thinking about preparedness and making a plan that fits your needs, visit [Deschutes County Public Health Emergency Preparedness](#).

Stay safe and take care,

Carissa Heinige, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator - Deschutes County



September is National Food Safety Education Month!



This month, take an active role in preventing foodborne illness, also known as “food poisoning.” The Federal government estimates that there are about 48 million cases of foodborne illness annually – that’s about 1 in 6 Americans each

year. Each year, these illnesses result in an estimated 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths. Following simple food safety tips can help lower your chance of getting sick.

Know the Symptoms

Consuming dangerous foodborne bacteria will usually cause illness within 1 to 3 days of eating the contaminated food. However, sickness can also occur within 20 minutes or up to 6 weeks later. Symptoms of foodborne illness can include: vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain – and flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache, and body ache.

If you think that you or a family member has a foodborne illness, **contact your healthcare provider immediately.**

Also, report the suspected foodborne illness to the local public health department:

- Deschutes County by phone at **541-317-3114** or online at [Report a public health concern](#)
- Jefferson County by phone at **(541) 475-4456**
- Crook County by phone at **(541) 447-5165**

or [Report Food Poisoning Now. Protect Others.](#)



Handle Foods Safely

Although most healthy people will recover from a foodborne illness within a short period of time, some can develop chronic, severe, or even life-threatening health problems. In addition, some people are at a higher risk for developing foodborne illness, including pregnant women, young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems (such as transplant patients and individuals with HIV/AIDS, cancer, or diabetes). To keep your family safer from food poisoning, **follow these four simple steps: clean, separate, cook, and chill.**

1. Wash hands and surfaces often

2. **Separate raw meats from other foods**
3. **Cook to the right temperature**
4. **Chill: Refrigerate foods promptly**



Invest in yourself

Do you prepare food for others in your community? Maybe you have a part-time job at a food truck, make food for church potlucks, serve food at events, or work in the kitchen at a long term care facility. Get the training you need to keep your customers safe. Earn your Food Handler's Certificate ([Oregon Food Handlers Card](#)), or, for additional food safety knowledge, take a Certified Food Manager's Exam. As a courtesy to our community, the Deschutes County Environmental Health department offers the ServSafe Certified Food Manager Class in-person here in Central Oregon every quarter. Our next ServSafe Certified Food Manager class will be a full-day, in-person class held in downtown Bend on **Monday, October 16, 2023**. Call 541-317-3114 to register. Other companies that offer Certified Food Manager training include:

- [ServSafe® - Food Handler, Manager and Responsible Alcohol Training - Home](#)
- [Food Manager Certification | Food Safety Training | 360training](#)
- [Food Safety Manager Certification | StateFoodSafety](#)

Wash hands and surfaces often

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets.
- Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item.
- Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. If you use cloth towels, launder them often in the hot cycle.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Scrub firm produce with a clean produce brush.
- With canned goods, remember to clean lids before opening.



Start to prepare now for Respiratory Virus Season!



The cold and flu season is right around the corner and it's time to prepare yourself and your family. Providers and Health Departments across the state are

keeping up to date with the latest information and the resources that will be available to our communities. We don't yet know when new COVID-19 doses tailored for current variants will be available but local public health are busy assessing community access and planning. DCHS won't offer scheduled COVID-19 booster clinics for September but call us at **541-699-5109** if you or your family have questions or trouble accessing vaccines recommended by your provider.

This year we will continue to focus our efforts on those in congregate settings like long term care facilities, those most at risk for severe disease and those who may not have other ways of accessing these vaccines. We expect to have more specific information in the next month.

Now is the time to think about prevention and take care of yourself :

- **COVID-19 doses, RSV vaccine and treatments and seasonal flu** vaccines are on the horizon. It's important to talk to your provider or pharmacist about what doses will be right for you, when and where you can get them. Large scale clinics for the general population may not be available.
- Practice common sense prevention such as frequent handwashing, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, being aware of ventilation in shared spaces, staying home while ill, wearing a mask and avoiding crowded spaces.

Before you get sick think about think sick day essentials and information to have on hand if you get sick.

Assess your readiness with items such as :

- Access to therapeutics - talk to your doctor to make a plan if you are at high risk or know how to access programs like Oregon Health Authority Color Health COVID-19 Treatment.
- Medicine cabinet staples like pain relievers, decongestants, and cough medicine
- Kitchen Pantry Staples that store well, are nourishing and you'll feel like eating while sick.
- Other essentials like tissues, hand soap and hand sanitizers
- Make a plan for your work, isolation away from other household members and childcare.



World Rabies Day is September 28th!

World Rabies Day (WDR), established by the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) and recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) every September 28, is a day to promote the fight against this disease and reinforce awareness about its prevention.

According to the [Oregon Veterinary Medical Association](#) human rabies is very rare in the United States but, worldwide, a person dies from rabies about every 10 minutes, mostly in Africa and Asia.

Although uncommon in humans and pets in Central Oregon, three bats found at different times in the southeast Bend area have recently tested positive for rabies. Today, a fourth bat in the northern part of the county also tested positive. Rabies is transmitted through the bite of an infected animal and while post exposure vaccination is effective, the best plan is prevention.

Health Services reminds you to take necessary precautions to protect yourself and your pets from rabies:

- Avoid physical contact with bats – healthy, sick, alive, or dead. Be sure to keep children and pets away from bats.

- Do not hand feed or otherwise handle stray animals and wildlife.
- Vaccinate all dogs and cats against rabies. This protects them and provides an immune barrier between humans and wild animals.

While bats play a valuable role in nature, contact with humans should be avoided. Sick bats may be seen flopping around on the ground or otherwise acting unusual. If you find a sick bat or other sick wildlife on your property, take children and pets indoors and call the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) at (541) 388-6363.

To protect your pet, make sure their rabies vaccinations are up to date. Dogs, cats, and ferrets should be vaccinated against rabies at three to six months of age. After initial vaccination, a booster is required in one year and then every three years after that. Under Oregon law, dogs and cats that do not have current vaccinations and are suspected of exposure to rabies must be euthanized or placed under strict quarantine for four months.

If a person or pet does come in physical contact with a bat or is bitten by an animal, promptly report it to:

- Deschutes County Animal Control at (541) 693-6911 or Deschutes County Environmental Health at (541) 317-3114
- Jefferson County Public Health by phone at (541) 475-4456
- Crook County Public Health by phone at (541) 447-5165

For more information on rabies in Oregon, check the Oregon Health Authority [Rabies Webpage](#)



COVID-19 Monitoring via Wastewater

As data reporting continues to change, we rely more heavily on new technology to help our community understand current risks to our community's health.

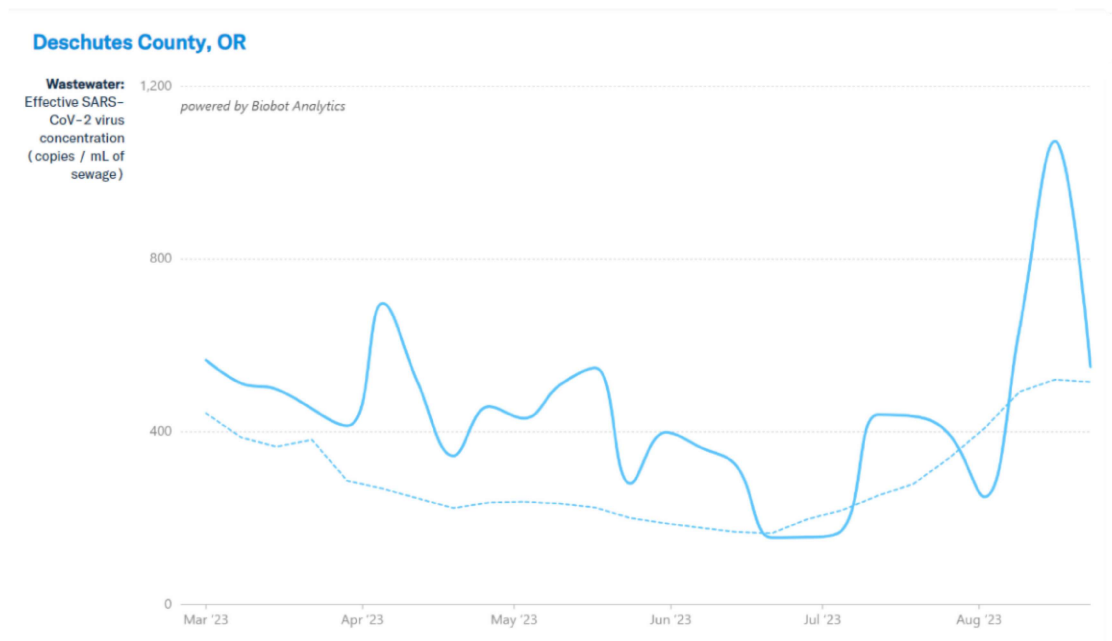
From air monitors to disease prevalence data collected from wastewater signals, our community has many ways to make decisions to protect health based on

data. One data type we continue to rely on on to understand current COVID-19 incidents comes from wastewater sampling.

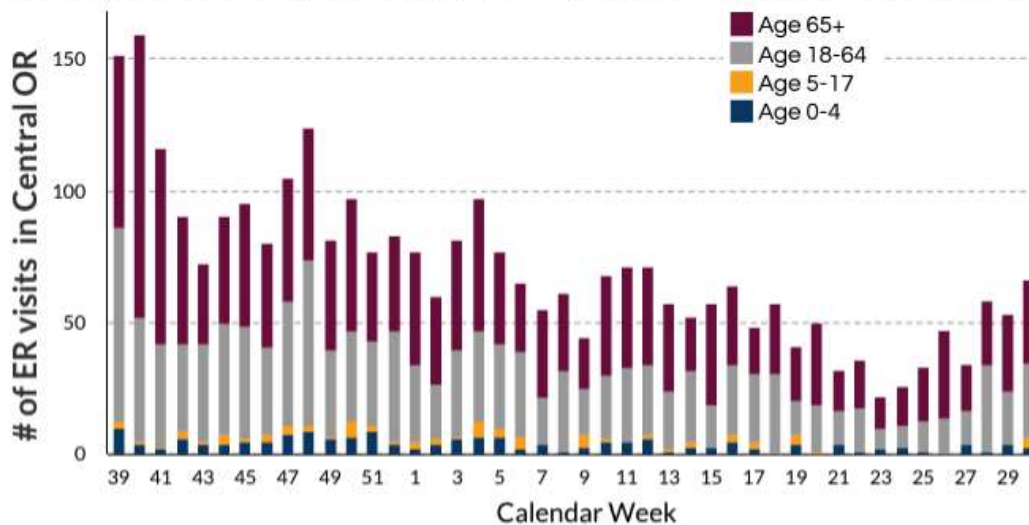
Over the last month we have seen an increase in the wastewater signal from the two systems that sample in our community, Bend and Sunriver. This correlates to other indicators we see such as increased calls to our Covid-19 team and requests for at home tests. This was a small surge compared to previous increases.

Case counts are another type of data we have access to, although, as we have described in previous months there is no longer required lab reporting of ALL COVID-19 cases into a centralized database, we do have other tools to help monitor disease prevalence and burden in our community. [The National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System \(NREVSS\)](#) is a voluntary laboratory-based system that monitors temporal and geographic circulation patterns (patterns occurring in time and place).

We have several laboratories in central Oregon that report into this database. NREVSS allows for timely analysis of data to monitor viral seasons and circulation patterns. We can also look at data from hospital admissions and ER visits to help understand trends. Locally we use this data to look at weekly trends in Covid-19, Flu and RSV. The hospitalization data from last month shows a slight uptick in COVID-19 like illness Emergency Room visits in the tri-county area. Check out the [report](#) and keep an eye out for the August Report in about a week.



Number of ER visits for COVID-19 like illness* by age group and week among Central Oregon (Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson County) residents



of ER visits by county for COVID-19 like illness

	Week 29	Week 30
Crook County residents	18	17
Deschutes County residents	34	46
Jefferson County residents	n/a	n/a

*COVID-19 related illnesses are monitored through the ESSENCE (Oregon) syndromic surveillance database. This report includes visits by Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson County residents to any ER across the state of Oregon.
n/a=not available. **Note:** Counts <=5 will not be displayed to protect confidentiality.

Our Health Equity & Engagement team is out and about in our community. This month you can find us at the following events:

- [Movies in the Park! | The Lorax at Ponderosa Park | 9.1](#)
- [Health and Wellness Fair at Ponderosa Park | 9.12](#)
- [Discover Nature Festival | 9.23](#)

Come talk to us about our programs and let us know what you would like to know more about!



COVID-19 Hotline Hours

- Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Have a question after hours or on weekends? Leave a voicemail, we will respond within 1 business day.
- COVID-19 Hotline, 541-699-5109

Public Health Resources:

- County and Central Oregon web resources:
 - [Crook County](#)
 - [Deschutes County](#)
 - [Jefferson County](#)

Did someone forward this report to you? Click here to sign up to receive the report directly to your inbox.

Responses to this email address are not monitored.

To request this information in an alternate format, please call (541) 322-7444
or send an email to info@deschutes.org.

If you received this report but you would not like to continue receiving it,
you can unsubscribe at any time using the link below.

Deschutes County | 1300 NW Wall Street, Bend, OR 97703

[Unsubscribe erik.breon@deschutes.org](mailto:erik.breon@deschutes.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by publichealthnews@deschutes.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!