



Jefferson County



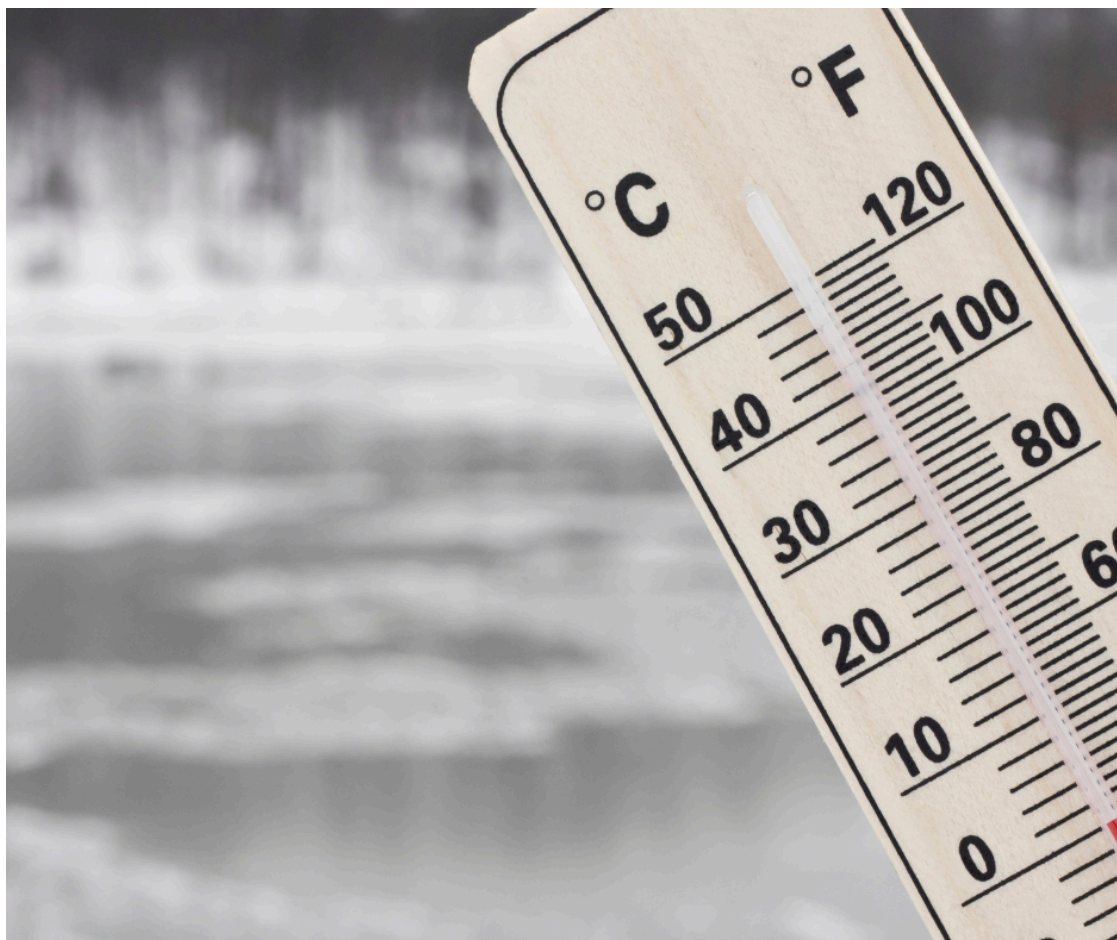
Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Central Oregon Public Health Monthly Update

October 25, 2024

The Central Oregon Public Health Newsletter is now available in Spanish!
To receive it in your mailbox click [here](#).

Fall Prep: Get Ready for Winter Hazards in Deschutes County



Fall brings beautiful colors to the landscape, crisp air that is perfect for walking, and of course pumpkin-flavored everything. Fall is also a great time to get ready for upcoming winter hazards that are often seen in Deschutes County.

Snowstorms and windstorms can cause transportation disruptions and power outages so it's important to ensure you and your family are prepared. Here are some ways you can get winter-ready this fall season:

1. Make sure your emergency kit is ready with warm clothing, blankets, non-perishable food and a hand-cranked/battery powered radio.
2. Make sure your vehicle is prepped for winter with snow tires (or chains) and a car emergency kit that can cover your needs if you get stranded in snow or ice.
3. Stock up on essentials and medications, as snowstorms can disrupt access to stores and services.
4. Keep up your health by staying up-to-date with vaccines and maintain a "safety first" mindset while traveling. Hand hygiene and mask wearing are effective ways to be safe!

Check out [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for more information on ways to be prepared for **winter storms** and **power outages**.

Partner Spotlight: Council on Aging,

Caring for the Caregivers



Family caregivers play an essential role in the lives of millions of older adults across the country, and November is National Family Caregivers Month that honors caregivers. These unsung heroes—often family members, close friends, or neighbors—take on the responsibility of ensuring that their loved ones are safe, comfortable, and well cared for. Yet, caregiving is a challenging and demanding task, one that can significantly impact the caregiver's physical, emotional, and mental well-being.

Caregiving is often a balancing act. Family caregivers frequently juggle caregiving responsibilities with work, personal commitments, and their own health needs. For many, caregiving is a full-time role on top of their existing obligations, leaving them with little time for themselves. **According to AARP**, over 53 million Americans provide unpaid care for a family member or friend, and nearly one-third of these caregivers are helping someone with a mental illness.

Unfortunately, this role can have significant impacts on the physical and mental health of caregivers. **AARP's 2020 Caregiving in the U.S. study** showed that nearly one-fifth (18%) of caregivers reported financial strain, more than one-third (36%) reported high emotional stress, and nearly one-quarter (23%) agreed that caregiving made it difficult for them to take care of their own physical health.

One of the most challenging aspects of caregiving is the sense of isolation. Caregivers often find themselves disconnected from friends, family, and social activities, as their time and energy are consumed by caregiving duties. The lack of personal time, personal space, and emotional support can take a toll, leading to stress, fatigue, and even depression. Many caregivers experience feelings of guilt for neglecting other relationships or for struggling with frustration or resentment toward their loved ones. This emotional burden, combined with the physical demands of caregiving, can severely affect their quality of life.

While caregiving is a deeply rewarding experience for many, it is crucial for caregivers to find balance and seek help when needed. Time management strategies, like keeping a daily journal to track caregiving tasks, can help caregivers identify moments of downtime and carve out space for self-care. Additionally, reaching out to support networks, whether it's asking a friend for help or joining a caregiving support group, can alleviate some of the emotional strain and provide a much-needed sense of community.

For family caregivers in Central Oregon, the **Council on Aging offers a range of services designed to ease the burden**. From providing respite care grants to offering information on local resources, the Council on Aging is here to assist. These resources help caregivers have the support they need to continue providing excellent care while maintaining their own well-being. For more information about the Council on Aging of Central Oregon's resources and services, please visit the website at www.councilonaging.org or call (541) 678-5483.

Additional Resources:

Caregiver Support Groups
Caregiver Action Network
Family Caregiver Alliance

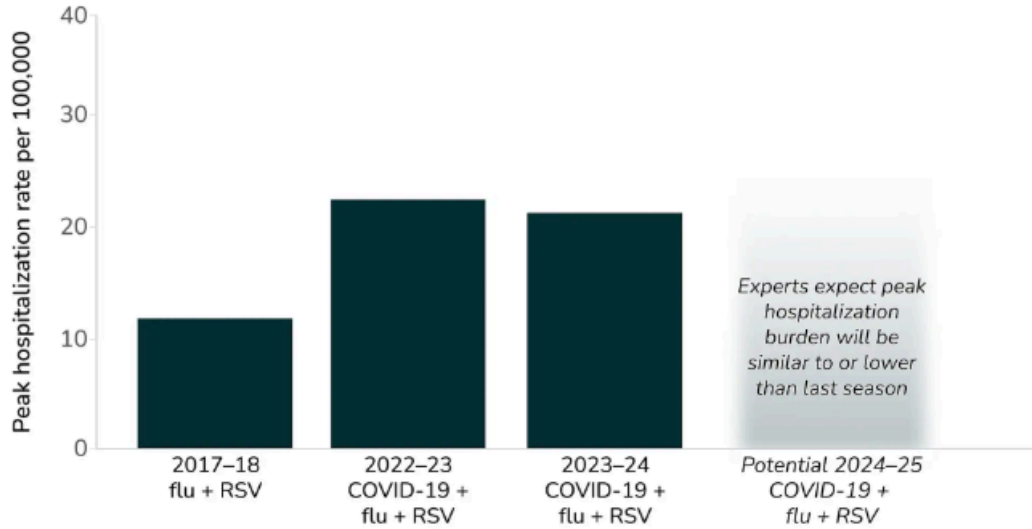
2024-2025 Respiratory Season Outlook

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) anticipates that hospitalizations due to COVID-19, influenza, and RSV will be similar or lower compared to the previous (2023-2024) season. However, a few factors could lead to higher hospitalizations this winter respiratory season, including new COVID-19 variants that are more resistant to previous

infection and vaccination immunity, more severe influenza strains, lower vaccine effectiveness, and less people getting vaccinated. Read more [here](#).

Upcoming 2024–25 respiratory season peak hospitalization burden likely similar to or lower than last year

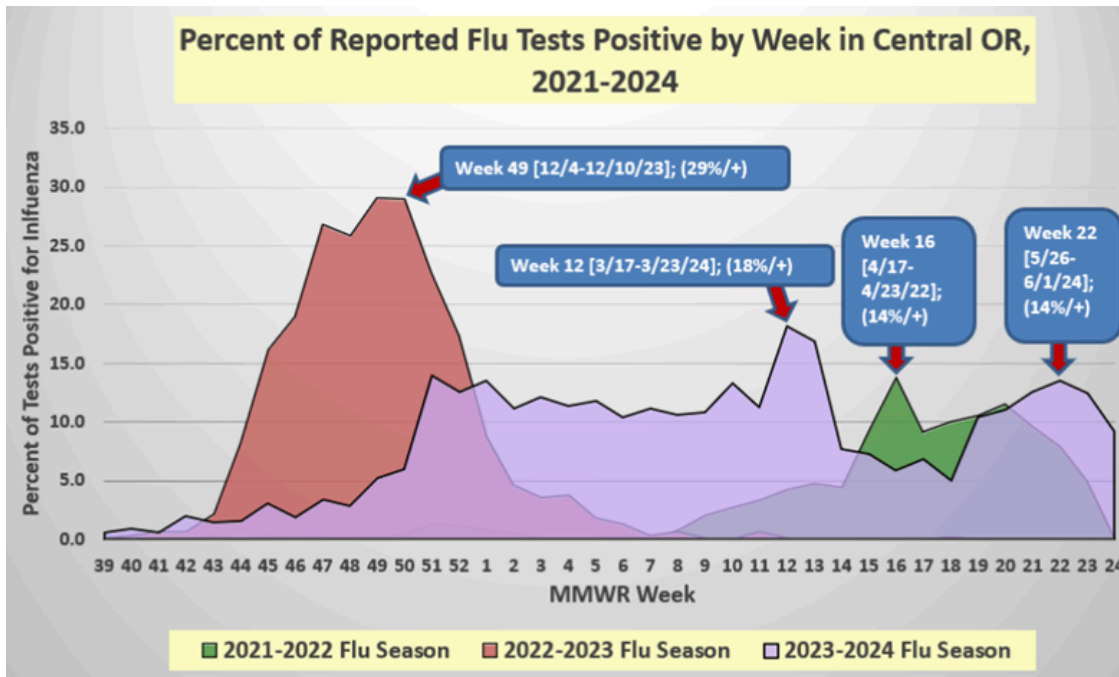
Combined peak hospitalization burden of COVID-19, influenza, and RSV



[Source for figure above: [CDC CFA: Qualitative Assessments](#)]

Trends in Influenza

Previous Season Trends



*%/+ Definition: percent positivity

During our most recent Central Oregon flu season, positive flu tests rose in late December and stayed somewhat steady through much of the late winter and spring. Cases peaked again in mid-March, followed by a drop for much of April and early May, and a second peak in late May.

The current (2024-2025) flu season officially kicked off at the end of September. As of mid-October, influenza percent positivity remains low.

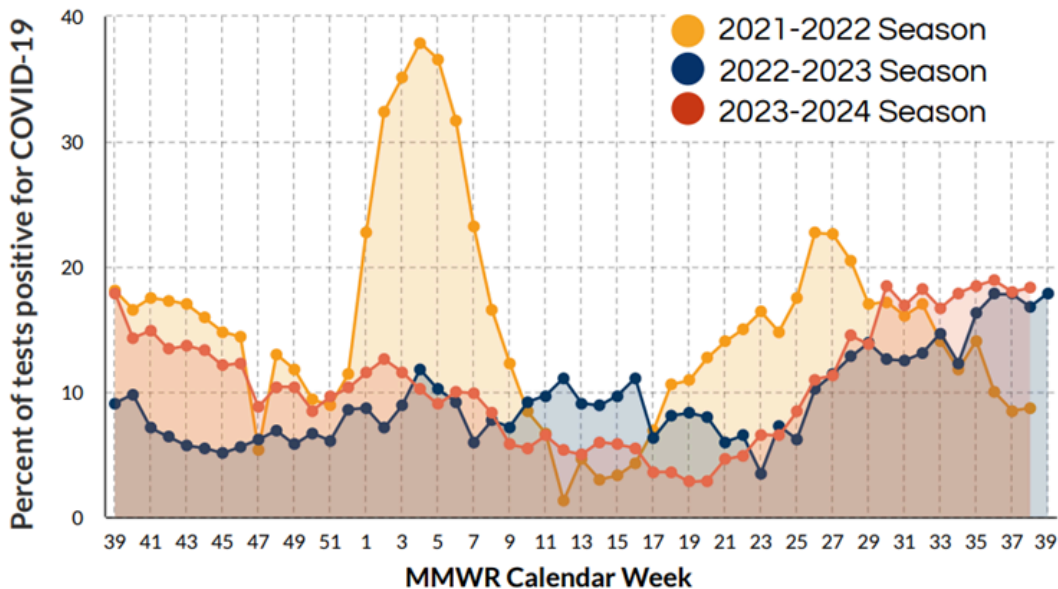
Protection Best Practices: Flu strains change frequently and our immune responses usually only last one year. Annual flu vaccines are recommended for everyone 6 months and older and are especially important for those in high-risk groups, **including: adults 65+years; individuals in nursing homes/long-term care facilities; young children (≤12 months); pregnant people (or those recently giving birth during the flu season); individuals with chronic health conditions.** [Source: *CDC Influenza (Flu): Who Needs a Flu Vaccine*].

COVID-19: Central OR

This summer’s COVID-19 wave was the most significant summer surge since July 2022. If COVID-19 infections continue to increase as we move into the fall/winter season, a late December peak in hospitalizations may occur. However, if a peak in hospitalizations occurs earlier this fall, a smaller peak may occur in mid-January (2025). [Source: *CDC CFA: Qualitative Assessments*].

Previous Season Trends

Percent of reported COVID-19 tests positive by MMWR week, 2021-2024

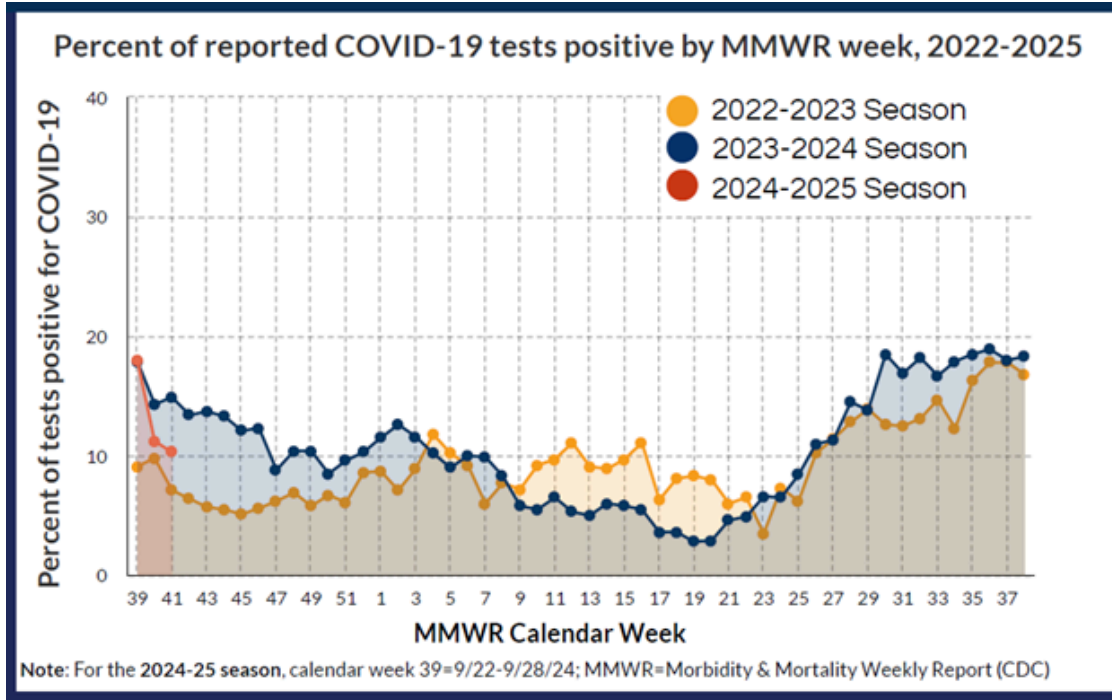


Note: For the 2023-24 season, calendar week 39=09/24-9/30/23; MMWR=Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report (CDC)

While public health experts anticipate that COVID-19 activity will eventually settle into more of a traditional seasonal pattern where highest rates of

cases occur in colder, winter months, many are unsure of when this will occur. The 1918 influenza pandemic took 5-6 years to fall into a seasonal pattern according to Andy Pekosz, PhD (Professor of Molecular and Immunology at Johns Hopkins)]. [Source: *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; article by Aliza Rosen*].

Current Season Kick-Off

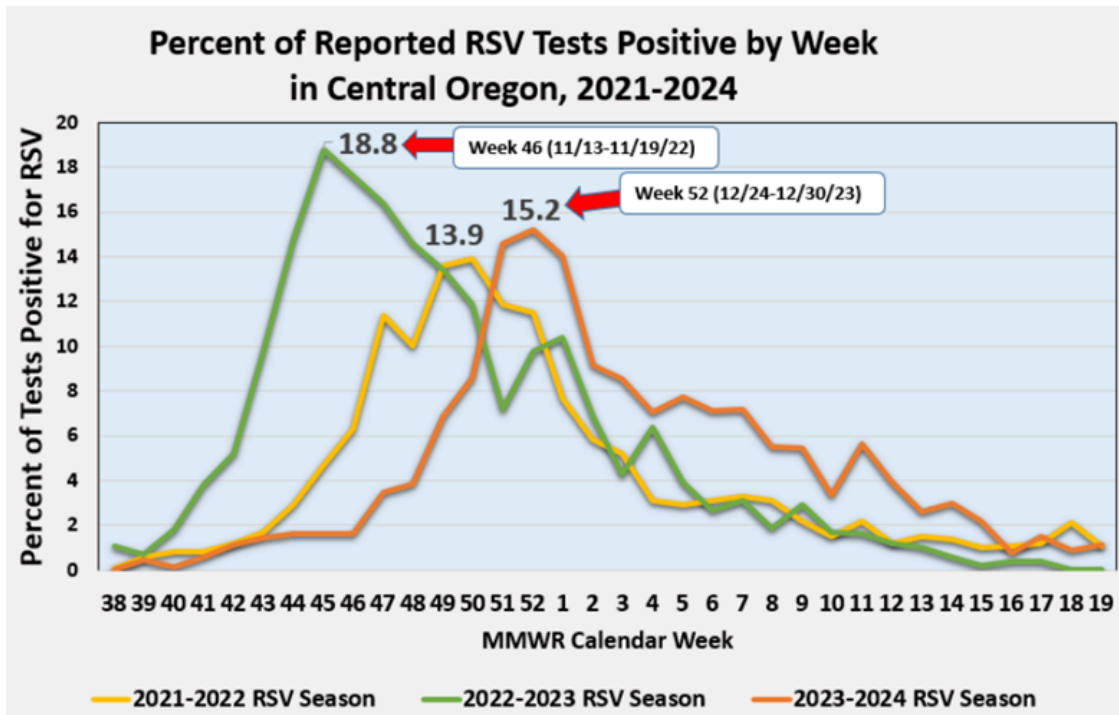


Protection Best Practices: Similar to flu vaccines, COVID-19 vaccine protection decreases over time, so staying up to date is important. In late August, the **FDA approved** a new COVID-19 vaccine for 2024-2025 season designed to target KP.2. This new vaccine is also believed to work well against KP.3.1.1. **The CDC currently recommends** that all individuals 6 months and older get the COVID-19 vaccine to protect against severe disease, hospitalization, and death. See updated list of conditions that may increase risk [here](#).

Trends in RSV

Similar to the trends in other respiratory outcomes (discussed above), RSV peak hospitalizations are also expected to follow normal seasonal patterns. Estimates of RSV vaccine effectiveness are thought to be between 73-88%. Overall, immunization uptake is not yet certain for RSV, as last year was the first year when immunization for older adults, pregnant individuals, and infants was recommended—limiting the ability to anticipate trends [Source: *CDC CFA: Qualitative Assessments*].

Read more information about about RSV trends in central Oregon [here](#).



Current Season Kick-Off

As of mid-October, 0 RSV tests positive have been reported in Central Oregon.

Protection Best Practices: RSV vaccines are generally for older adults and also pregnant individuals. Among older adults 75+ years, an RSV vaccine is recommended—among adults 60-74 years, the vaccine is recommended *only* for those at increased risk for severe RSV disease (see a list of those at increased risk [here](#)). To prevent severe RSV disease in infants, the CDC recommends either a [maternal RSV vaccination](#) (during weeks 32-36 of pregnancy) *or* infant immunization with an RSV monoclonal antibody.

The RSV vaccine is *not* currently an annual vaccine—so you don’t need to get a new dose every year. If you’ve already gotten an RSV vaccine, no need to get another [Source: [CDC Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection \(RSV\): Vaccines for Older Adults](#)].

A note on Bird Flu (H5N1): While H5N1 is currently spreading globally in wild bird populations, causing outbreaks in poultry and dairy cows in the United States, and a few recent human cases have emerged among poultry and dairy workers, the current risk of H5N1 infection to humans remains low. [Source: [CDC Avian Influenza \(Bird Flu\) Current Situation](#)]

Deschutes County Public Health encourages all individuals to stay up to date with vaccinations this fall season and recommends talking with your healthcare provider(s) about vaccinations.

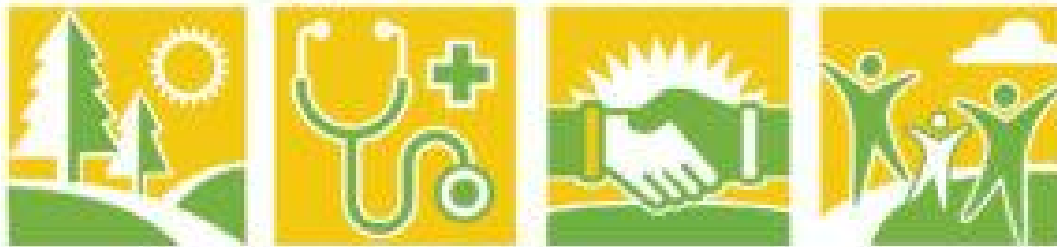
To sign up for our **Deschutes County Weekly Flu Report** which includes national, statewide, and regional data/trends on influenza, RSV, and COVID-19, please sign-up [here](#).

Weekly respiratory reports are also posted to our Deschutes County Health Services website [here](#).

National Rural Health Day

National Rural Health Day

Celebrating the **Power of Rural!**®



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2024

National Rural Health Day (November 21) is an opportunity to bring attention to and honor the incredible efforts of rural healthcare providers, communities, organizations, and others dedicated to addressing the unique healthcare needs of rural America. We are excited to highlight the rural communities across our diverse landscapes that make Central Oregon home.

Deschutes County is the fastest growing county in Oregon, with the population increasing 31% since 2010. However, outside of Bend and Redmond, the tri-county area is designated rural. Over 67% of Jefferson County's and over 50% of Crook County's population resides in rural areas. In general, rural areas are more likely to experience food insecurity and higher unemployment due to geographic location and available services. This divide between rural and urban poses further challenges to health and healthcare access. Access to healthcare, measured by % of population without insurance coverage and amount of travel time required to see a primary care physician, among other metrics, is worse in rural areas than

in urban. In Central Oregon the tri-county healthcare system is working to combat these access disparities in a number of ways: rural health clinics, mobile vans, community health workers, and air transport services.

Rural Health Clinics

Rural Health Clinics are a key component of the U.S. rural health system. In Central Oregon, rural clinics offer free or reduced-cost care and accept uninsured or OHP members.

- Services are provided by Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson County Public Health Departments, **Mosaic Community Health** with offices across the region, and **La Pine Community Health Center** which serves the southern Deschutes County area.
- **School Based Health Centers (SBHC)** provide a wide range of services for people between the ages of 0-19 regardless of ability to pay or immigration status. The SBHC in La Pine even sees patients of all ages! SBHCs provide critical health services such as well-child exams, sick visits, minor injury treatment, vision, dental and other health screenings, immunizations, reproductive health services, and more.

Mobile Vans

Mosaic Community Health operates a **mobile van** that travels to outlying areas to provide basic health and dental services in the tri-county region. Deschutes County Public Health operates mobile vans that offer STI/HIV testing at times and locations found on this **calendar**, and the Deschutes County WIC mobile van offers appointments, nutrition education and counseling, and help accessing healthcare for pregnant women, new mothers, and young children up to 5 years old in **Terrebonne and other locations around the county**.

Community Health Workers

Community Health Workers are also deployed in rural areas and work for various healthcare entities and social service organizations. Their work includes helping people connect to and navigate resources that can improve health outcomes, including obtaining transport to medical appointments.

- Did you know that in Central Oregon, **Nurse Family Support Services** programs provide 1-3 free nurse home-visits to check in on new parents and their newborns before their 6-week postpartum appointment? These incredible teams also connect those families to community resources. It is free and available for all families with newborns. This service especially beneficial for rural families to help decrease isolation and the need to travel long distances as they learn to care for their newborn.

Air Transport Services

For emergencies for folks who do not have access to local clinics, two private, membership-based emergency air transport services are available: **AirLink** and **LifeFlight**. These services can transport people with critical health emergencies to St. Charles or elsewhere in the state to receive the care they need.

Our rural communities are the backbone of Central Oregon. Let's all celebrate our rural residents on November 21. Please be sure to share these healthcare resources with your rural friends and families who may not have access to this newsletter.

MythBusters: Thawing Turkey



As the weather cools and the leaves change color, we begin to prepare for the holiday season. From turkeys and hams to holiday desserts, all the best foods will soon make an appearance on holiday tables. But, along with these tasty treats comes some potential food safety issues. Turkey is one of the most popular main dishes during this season and will soon be the centerpiece of many tables in our community. Those of us who celebrate Thanksgiving Day will soon be buying the bird whole – and typically frozen. While keeping a large turkey frozen preserves the quality and safety of the meat, thawing it out before cooking it can present several food safety risks.

But never fear! There are ways to avoid a foodborne illness disaster this holiday season.

First, keep all frozen meats (including whole turkeys) frozen until you're ready to thaw. Limit transportation time as much as possible, so try to grocery shop after completing any other errands you might have. Your freezer should be kept cold enough to ensure freezing temperatures, around 0° Fahrenheit.

Another way for foodborne illness to sneak into your holiday meal is during the process of thawing. There are three safe ways to thaw a frozen turkey:

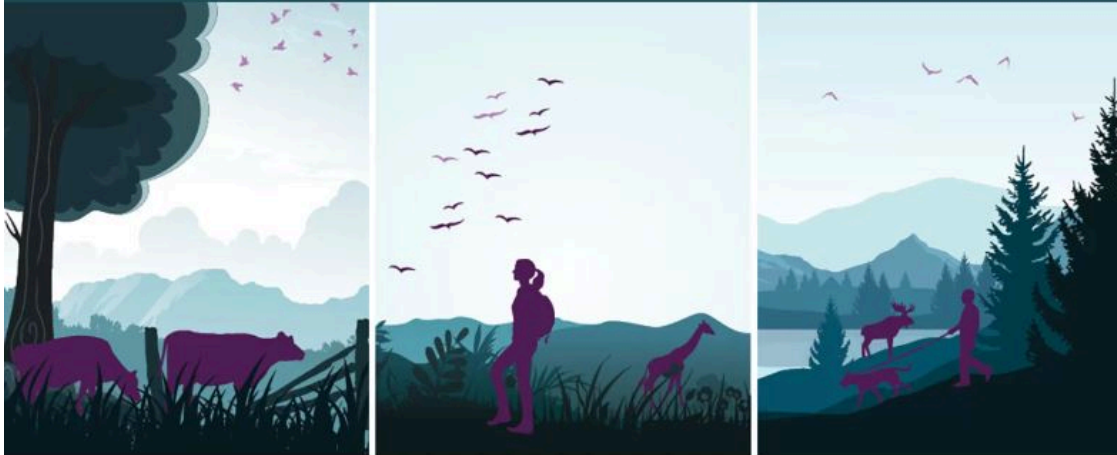
1. The most common method is to thaw your turkey in the refrigerator. Plan ahead to allow it adequate time, as it takes about 24 hours for every 4-5 pounds of turkey to thaw completely. That means if you have a 15-pound bird, it can take up to three days! When thawing in the fridge, the turkey should always be placed in a container on the lowest shelf in your fridge to prevent the raw juices from dripping onto fresh foods like fruits and vegetables.
2. If you forget to take your bird out of the freezer in time, you can always thaw it in cold water. Fill your sink with water that is no warmer than 70° Fahrenheit and place your turkey in a leakproof bag, which will prevent raw juice from seeping out and contaminating your sink. Place the bagged turkey in the cold water, completely submerge it, and change out the water every 30 minutes. This method is faster, taking about 30 minutes per pound of meat – so your 15-pound bird will thaw in about 7.5 hours rather than three days. The turkey should be cooked as soon as it is done thawing.
3. If you're really pressed for time, you can thaw a turkey in the microwave. Only use this method if the turkey will easily fit inside the microwave and be sure to check what power level the microwave manufacturer recommends for thawing meat. If using the microwave to thaw, remove the turkey from all wrappings and place it on a microwave safe dish. Then, use the defrost by weight setting and enter the weight of your turkey. Although microwaves vary, it's usually acceptable to allow 6 minutes per pound of turkey. Rotate the bird often during this process and cook it immediately after thawing.

To avoid foodborne illness this holiday season, always make sure to follow safe food handling practices. Wash your hands often during food preparation, especially before and after handling raw meat of any kind, and always store raw meat below ready to eat food. Don't forget to thaw your turkey using one of the methods above (never let it thaw on the counter!)– and most importantly, enjoy the holiday season foodborne illness free!

One Health Day

ONE HEALTH DAY

NOVEMBER 3



**CONNECTING HUMAN, ANIMAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:**
WHEN WE PROTECT **ONE**, WE HELP PROTECT **ALL**.



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

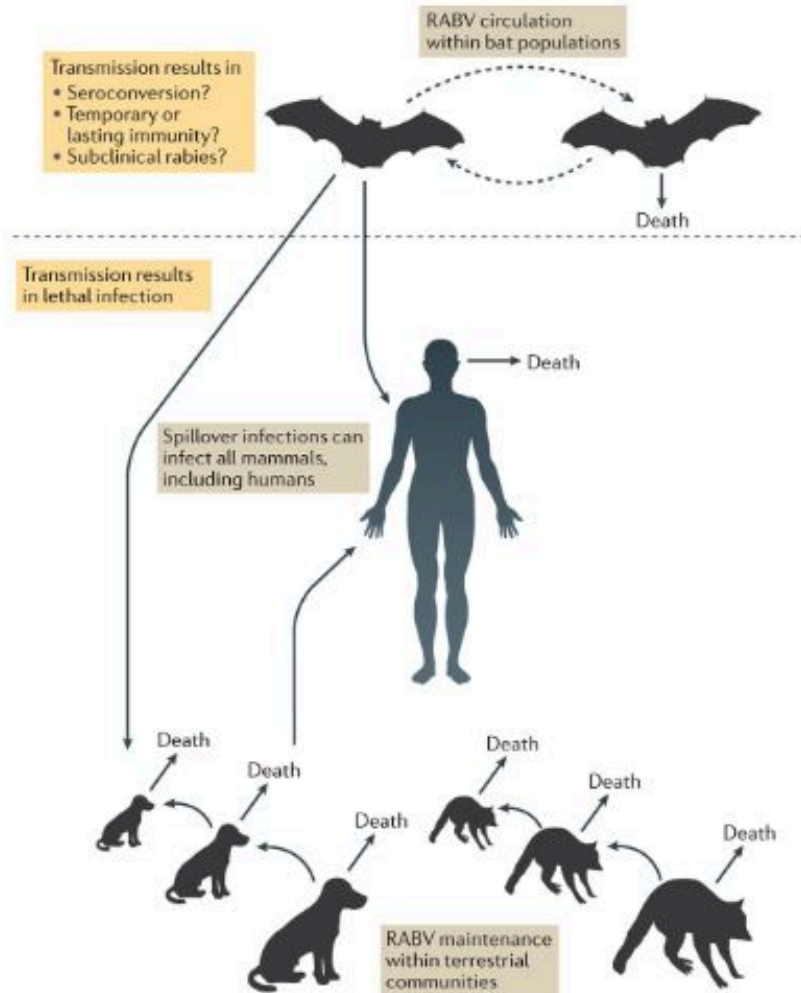
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November 3rd is One Health Day, a day dedicated to bringing awareness to the connections between human, animal, and environmental health and show the importance of these areas working together to improve the health of all..

One Health is a concept that the health of people, animals and the environment are connected with each other. Zoonotic diseases are one aspect addressed in the One Health concept. These are infectious diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans, such as rabies, avian influenza (bird flu), plague, and Lyme disease. ***Did you know that an estimated 75% of newly emerging infectious diseases and 60% of known human infectious diseases are zoonotic?***

An example of the One Health concept in action is the oldest known infectious disease that still kills humans today with ~59,000 human deaths annually - Rabies. Rabies is a virus found in wild animals, most commonly bats, with 8% of bats in Oregon testing positive for rabies. Wild animals infected with rabies may be in an environment shared with pet animals and humans (example could be a local trail where you're walking your dog, or your cat wandering outside). If the infected animal comes in contact

with a pet, the disease can be passed on to the pet. If a person is bitten or scratched by an infected pet, they may also be at risk for rabies.



Nature Reviews | Microbiology

The imagine above describes how rabies can spread between wildlife, domesticated animals and humans. RABV circulation within the bat population describes rabies constantly being circulated among bats, who then can transmit via exposure or bite to humans or other animals. Rabies may continue spreading among other animal populations, continuing to cause death and additional infections until the cycle is broken.

While the chance of this occurring is very low (with the last dog testing positive for Rabies in Oregon in 1990), it is important to be aware of and report any animal bites to Deschutes County for appropriate action. More information on Animal Bites and Rabies in Deschutes County can be found [here](#).

As humans and their pets continue recreating outdoors, working in agricultural settings, and/or move into areas close to undeveloped land, there is more interaction between humans, animals and their environment. Additionally, newly emerging zoonotic diseases and the rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria means it is increasingly important for

human medical providers, veterinarians, ecologists and policy makers to practice the One Health concept to promote health and safety.

Ways to consider a One Health approach are: increased disease monitoring and coordinating between medical and veterinary practices, considering environmental impacts in agriculture and wildlife management, and promoting the education between human, animal and environmental health.

As we celebrate One Health Day on November 3rd, let us recognize the importance of working together to tackle health challenges that impact us all. By collaborating across human, animal and environmental health, we can build a healthier future for all.

Health Services hosts numerous classes and special events each month!

For details about these events and any updates please visit our [Health Services Calendar](#).

Public Health Resources:

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

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