

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 7/1/2021

TO: Grant County healthcare providers, infection control staff, supervisory nursing staff, clinic management, school nurses.
 Grant County Emergency Management
 Grant County Media

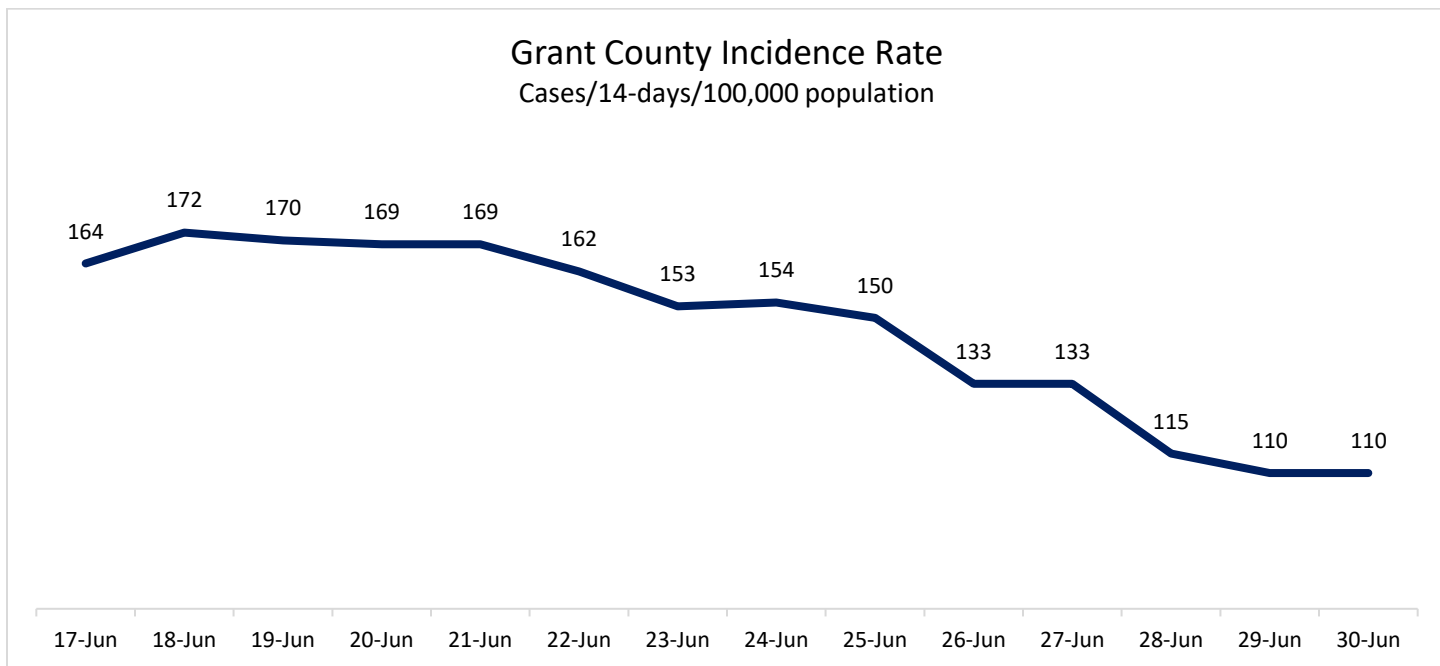
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Grant County Health Officer Ending Masking Mandate

Grant County to Follow CDC and DOH Guidance on Masking

Grant County, WA – Grant County Health Officer, Dr. Alexander Brzezny, is ending the masking mandate in Grant County effective **immediately**. The mandate became active on May 27, 2020. **Grant County will now follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) guidance on masking.** The decision follows a close monitoring of the recent COVID-19 trends, its spread, COVID hospitalizations and health systems capacity trends and coincides with the state’s economic reopening announced on June 30th, 2021.



The pandemic is not over, however Grant County Health District encourages vaccinations as the most reliable method of suppressing and eventually controlling COVID-19 in our communities. Masking is still appropriate in many situations.

CDC states that individuals **fully vaccinated** against COVID-19 can resume activities they did prior to the pandemic without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required to do so by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules and regulations.

People who are **not fully vaccinated need to continue wearing a face mask in public indoor settings** even as things start to go back to normal gradually.

In general, people are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, OR
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

Those not meeting these requirements, are NOT considered fully vaccinated, regardless of age. Those with conditions or taking medications that weaken the immune system may not be fully protected even after being fully vaccinated. Taking all precautions, including masking, should be discussed with a healthcare provider.

The settings in which **all people, including those fully vaccinated**, are required to wear masks include:

- Childcare facilities, camps, K-12 schools, and other youth settings where children are present or expected to be present;
- Healthcare settings, in accordance with CDC health care infection prevention and control recommendations;
- Correctional facilities in areas where incarcerated individuals are present or expected to be present;
- Homeless shelters in areas where individuals being served are present or expected to be present;
- Public transportation and transportation hubs, including airports, bus or ferry terminals, train and subway stations.

Some exceptions to the face covering requirement include:

- People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, except as listed above
- When outdoors (unvaccinated people in crowded places are encouraged to wear a mask);
- When engaged in outdoor training or competition; and
- When anyone in a group is deaf or hard of hearing and not wearing a face covering is essential for communication.

For a full list of exemptions to the face covering requirement, please refer to Order 20-03.3:

https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/Secretary_of_Health_Order_20-03_Statewide_Face_Coverings.pdf.

Current guidance on masking in businesses remains unchanged:

- Fully vaccinated employees do not have to wear a mask, unless their employer requires it;
- Before ending masking, employers must confirm workers are fully vaccinated;
- Regardless of vaccination status, masks are still required in health care settings, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, schools, childcare centers or day camps;
- Unvaccinated individuals are still required to wear face coverings in all indoor public spaces and;
- Businesses may choose to require masking, so you should keep a mask handy for places where they are required.
- Further information about masking in the workplace can be found at: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F414-179-000.pdf>.

For a recent DOH statement on masking, please refer to DOH press release:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Newsroom/Articles/ID/2847/Dont-forget-your-mask-after-June-30-you-may-still-need-it-even-if-youre-vaccinated>

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