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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HUMBOLDT COUNTY ISSUES GUIDANCE ON AT-HOME COVID-19 TESTING

WINNEMUCCA, Nev.— With the increasing availability of over-the-counter (OTC) COVID-19 tests, Humboldt County is issuing information to residents to help understand when self-tests might be useful and when their use should be limited.

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized the use of self-administered COVID-19 tests as they can be convenient in detecting COVID-19 quickly; however, because they are administered outside of medical settings, there is no way to verify the test was done correctly and which person provided the sample for the test.

Because of this, positive self-test results are not counted toward the official COVID-19 case counts in Humboldt County and results are usually not used to determine if someone can attend work, school or travel.

Still, self-testing is one of several strategies to reduce the chances of COVID transmission, along with vaccination, masking and physical distancing; self-tests also may be used regardless of vaccination or symptom status.

A positive self-test result means the test detected the virus, the person is infected and should isolate for five days from the date of the test, per updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

However, commercially produced self-tests are not as sensitive as other tests, so there is a higher chance of a false negative result—especially if the manufacturer’s instructions for performing the test are not followed carefully.

If a person who is symptomatic or who has had direct exposure gets a negative result using one of the over-the-counter rapid antigen tests, they should follow up with a lab-resulted PCR molecular test. They should quarantine until their results are confirmed.

If positive, they should isolate for five days from the date of the PCR test; if the PCR test is negative, they do not need to quarantine past 5 days, but should remain watchful for symptoms.

If used appropriately, with all directions followed properly, Humboldt County Health Officer Charles Stringham, MD, said over-the-counter tests can help reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

“If you have symptoms or have had a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, you should be tested, regardless of your vaccination status,” he said.

The time to get tested is five days after exposure, or as soon as symptoms occur. Vaccinated persons do not need to quarantine during the waiting period, but should wear a mask; unvaccinated persons should quarantine until it is time to test. If positive, they should move from quarantine to isolation.

Dr. Stringham said Humboldt County residents may also consider self-testing to screen for COVID-19 immediately before an activity; those who test positive should immediately begin isolation.

All positive cases should notify close contacts of potential exposure; that goes for anyone who was within six feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

At-home COVID-19 tests can be purchased at retail and pharmacy stores or online. The CDC notes that some home COVID tests may have age limitations or expiration dates. For a list of FDA-approved tests, visit the [FDA website](#).

Drive-through COVID-19 testing is available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at Humboldt General Hospital’s screening clinic, located at 51 E. Haskell Street. There is no cost for testing.

For those who test positive and are experiencing mild to moderate symptoms, the hospital offers monoclonal antibody treatments Monday through Friday. To schedule an appointment, please visit www.hghospital.org/covid. Those who cannot access the online registration should call (775) 623-7923. Proof of a positive COVID test is required. There is no cost for the drug itself, although patients will be charged a fee for its administration. Patients must be 12 years or older AND weigh more than 80 pounds to participate.

In addition, HGH has a COVID-19 medical provider on staff who is available to meet with those seeking to prevent COVID, those who have tested positive for the virus, and those who continue to experience the lingering effects of COVID illness. To make an appointment, please call (775) 623-5222, ext. 1379. The clinic is located at 51 E. Haskell Street in the building adjacent to the drive-through COVID-19 screening clinic.

For any questions regarding COVID-19 testing, vaccination or more, please email vaccine@humboldtcountynv.gov. Se habla español.

For the most up-to-date vaccine information, please call the COVID-19 Recorded Information Line at (775) 375-3200. The line is updated with new information every Friday (not including holidays), or as needed.

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