

No mask debate

Officials recommend wearing masks when in public, and there is a reason why

By **Sabrina Thompson**
The Observer

UNION COUNTY — One of the most often-heard, and often-debated, recommendations for combating the spread of COVID-19 is to wear a mask.

“We continue to see evidence coming forward through studies being conducted about their effectiveness,” said Carrie Brogotti, public health administrator for the Center for Human Development, La Grande. “We don’t want people to have a false sense of security it will 100% protect them. Truly, the masks are to protect those around you rather than the wearer. We see their effectiveness as a tool in stopping transmission.”

Those who are not confirmed cases or don’t have symptoms of COVID-19 are recommended to wear a mask when in an area of high traffic and potential contamination, such as grocery stores, work, social and mass gatherings, and where physical distancing cannot be achieved, such as public transportation or at the doctor’s office. Those with COVID-19 symptoms or confirmed cases are advised to wear a mask always when leaving the house.

“The purpose of the masks is to protect the people around you,” Brogotti said. “To take care of each other. In my mind, our mission is to protect the most vulnerable in the community. Those who are at risk due to conditions and age. Our objective is to keep those people safe.”

There are two different types of masks, medical and non-medical. Medical masks include N95 respirators and surgical masks, and the World Health Organization does not recommend these for general use, as it could divert a needed resource from health workers and at-risk individuals. Non-medical masks including paper disposable masks, cloth masks and other face coverings that can be made at home.

They are not as effective as medical masks, but studies show they provide a level of protection in slowing the spread of COVID-19, according to the World Health Organization.

WHO released an updated document regarding mask wearing on June 5, stating: “The use of masks is part of a comprehensive package of the prevention and control measures that can limit the spread of certain respiratory viral diseases, including COVID-19. Masks can be used either for protection of healthy persons (worn to protect oneself when in contact with an infected individual) or for source control (worn by an infected individual to prevent onward transmission).”

Perhaps part of the confusion around the effectiveness of face coverings comes from the fact that WHO did not recommend everyone wear face masks in the initial advice published in April. The organization has since changed its guidance as more research became available.

However, there are some known and researched risks regarding wearing face coverings. According to a 2006 and 2017 study on contamination, there is a risk of self-contamination when using a face mask and then subsequently touching the eyes or face after removing it. Contamination also can occur when masks are not removed after being wet or soiled.

Depending on the type of mask used, other potential risks include skin irritation and acne, difficulty breathing and headaches. Some people may not be able to wear a mask due to medical conditions, which is why Brogotti said it is important for those who can wear a mask to do so.

While there is evidence of risks and ineffectiveness, local, national and international public health agencies and governments all agree at this time that masks are one of the most effective tools in curbing the spread of COVID-19.

Some attractions open during Phase 1 and 2, others remain closed

By **Rosemarie Stein**
The Oregonian/OregonLive via AP StoryShare

PORTLAND — As metro-area counties are approved to open for Phase 1, some attractions are now allowing visitors.

The openings in Multnomah County are tied to a three-week state-mandated pause on further reopening of neighboring Washington and Clackamas counties. It also comes with a mandate that beginning June 24, members in the Tri-County region and in Marion, Polk, Lincoln and Hood River counties must use a face covering whenever they are indoors in a space shared by other members of the public.

Here’s a look at what’s open and what closed among museums, shopping malls and other attractions.

AQUARIUMS & ZOOS

The Oregon Zoo is getting ready for a limited reopening in the near future. Guests should expect timed-entry passes that will need to be purchased in advance.

The Oregon Coast Aquarium in Newport remains closed, but Seaside Aquarium is open. All visitors and staff are required to wear masks.

MUSEUMS

The High Desert Museum in Bend reopened June 17. The museum will require patrons to wear

face coverings and will cap entries. Purchase advance tickets for timed entry at highdesertmuseum.org/tickets

OMSI will partially open June 20 with timed entry admissions, heightened cleaning guidelines, and a limited number of people allowed to view the Body Worlds “The Cycle of Life” exhibit and for submarine visits. Details at omsi.edu

The Oregon Historical Society is working on plans to reopen in early July.

The Portland Art Museum and Northwest Film Center remain closed.

The End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center remains closed to the public.

PUBLIC GARDENS

The Portland Japanese Garden reopened to visitors with some restrictions June 11. See new rules and guidelines at japanese-garden.org/reopening

The Grotto reopened June 12. Hours are 9 a.m.- 8:30 p.m. daily. See a list of visitor guidelines at thegrotto.org/reopening-guidelines

The Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden remains closed.

The Oregon Garden in Silverton is open. For a list of changes made in response to COVID-19 go to oregongarden.org

The Lan Su Chinese Garden has not set an opening date.

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To the GRH Regional Medical Clinic team as a Primary Care Provider (PCP)

Tracey Tracy, MD, joins the GRH Regional Medical Clinic primary care team from a family medicine clinic in Clackamas, Oregon. She attended medical school at Oregon Health & Sciences University in Portland, and completed her residency with Providence Milwaukie Family Medicine. Dr. Tracy welcomes patients of all ages and gender identities from infants to seniors, and enjoys taking care of multi-generational families. Her goal is to partner with each patient to achieve optimal management of their chronic health conditions and focus on preventive medicine. In her free time, you’ll find Dr. Tracy outdoors. She loves cycling, hiking, golfing, snowshoeing, travel, and exercises daily as well. She spent her childhood in eastern Oregon, then lived in Europe and in the Midwest. After spending over 20 years in the Portland metro area, Dr. Tracy is excited to be back on the sunnier and drier side of the state. Join us in welcoming Dr. Tracy to the Grande Ronde Valley!



Tracey Tracy, MD

GRH Regional Medical Clinic

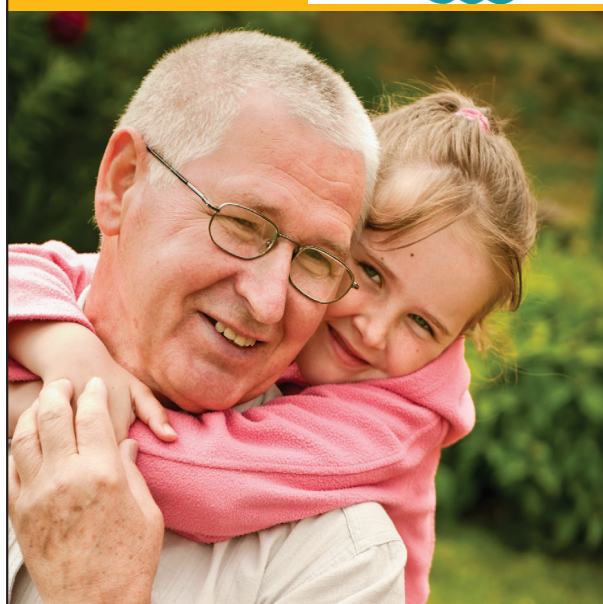
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