

Testing: The outbreaks were directly tied to 38 of the county’s 46 cases

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and the contacts of confirmed cases to be able to self-quarantine for 14 days and be eligible for unemployment.

The outbreaks were directly tied to 38 of the county’s 46 coronavirus cases.

Jonathan Modie, a spokesman for the Oregon Health Authority, said in an email Friday that the state appreciates and shares McNickle’s heartfelt concerns. He also acknowledged that food processors have been severely impacted by the virus and that Hispanic workers have been disproportionately affected.

He said Dr. Paul Cieslak, the medical director for communicable diseases at the health authority, spoke with McNickle about his letter and discussed the importance of continued close collaboration between the state and the county in responding to outbreaks at food processors.

“While it has been the topic of internal discussions, OHA is not at this time recommending mandatory, continuous testing at food processing facilities,” Modie said.

McNickle said he is glad the health authority is taking the county’s concerns seriously.

“I hope OHA will reconsider the need for more and consistent testing for the populations who are most at risk of contracting COVID due to their work,” he said in an email.

Modie said the health authority is asking businesses to ensure workers who decide to isolate get access to financial support through community-based

organizations, unemployment benefits and federal relief.

He said the health authority has also recently updated its guidance that “acknowledges the appropriateness in some circumstances of testing asymptomatic individuals who are in historically underserved populations that have borne a disproportionate burden of disease during this pandemic, such as those who identify as Latino/Latina/Latinx, and encourages agricultural employers to help employees who may have been exposed to sick co-workers to access testing for COVID-19, with assistance of the local public health authority.”

U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici asked the Oregon Health Authority for clarification on the guidance Saturday after The Oregonian reported a Hispanic couple in Washington County was denied coronavirus testing at two hospitals, reportedly because they were asymptomatic.

“Expanded testing is an important step in slowing the spread among this community, but it is clear that barriers still exist to getting resources and support to the Latinx population,” the Oregon Democrat said in a letter to Patrick Allen, the director of the health authority.

“As you continue to address this disparity, I encourage you to work directly with health care providers and other community leaders to provide them with a clear plan to get information and resources to their communities; a plan that takes into consideration potential language and cultural barriers.”

Memorial: Difficult transition to civilian life

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designed for river missions.

“They ambushed us,” Courtney said. “The first rocket hit right behind me, blew chunks out of my radio, threw me up against the wall and there was a lot of guys injured bad. They hit the ammo boxes, and the ammo boxes started exploding. Thank gosh a Navy guy pulled himself up and started shooting back at them until they stopped.”

He spent the last eight months of service in Fort Col-



R.J. Marx/The Astorian
Debbie and Jim Courtney at their Seaside home.

lins, Colorado, training officers for combat.

The transition from mili-

tary service to civilian life was difficult. “I had a hard time,” he said. “My ex couldn’t deal with me. I started drinking a lot. Staying out late.”

The birth of a child helped put Courtney back on the right path with a career in construction. But the marriage didn’t last.

“I didn’t meet Deb until 27 years ago,” he said. “I was doing a construction job in Beaverton, and she was flagging,” he recalled. “She was my personal flagger.”

Debbie, with two young daughters, was going through

a divorce at the time.

They dated for five years before marrying.

“But construction right then was a real hard one,” he said. “We ended up losing everything and that’s when we hit the road and went down to Arizona.”

They returned to Beaverton for the birth of a grandchild and entered the lodging business. The Courtneys took over the management of the Lamplighter Motel on Marine Drive in Astoria in late 2009.

“It worked out really good,” he said.

Cruises: Port prevented from hosting mostly empty cruise ships

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they are negotiating with cruise companies.

American Cruise Lines is the largest domestic cruise company in the U.S., offering both river and nearshore cruises. The City Council agreed last year to lease the eastern portion of the 17th Street Dock to the company, giving it priority docking rights and the job of scheduling ships.

Alexa Paoletta, a spokeswoman for American Cruise Lines, said the company hopes to restart cruises

this weekend in the Pacific Northwest, followed by the Mississippi River and Alaska in July.

American Cruise Lines outlined a series of new measures on its website to make passengers safer, from voluntarily reducing the capacity on all ships to an agreement with Vikand Solutions, a maritime medical company that will screen passengers. The cruise company pointed out several advantages with its smaller, domestic ships, such as increased space for guests, separate ventilation systems

and water filtration systems for each stateroom.

Paoletta said American Cruise Lines also reached out to passengers to ensure they were willing to sail under the increased coronavirus protocols, considering its clientele skews older and is more at risk from the virus.

The return of river cruises comes after local officials prevented the Port of Astoria from hosting mostly empty oceangoing cruise ships and crews, idled globally amid the pandemic. The opportunity could have made the

Port around \$15,000 a day, according to Will Isom, the agency’s executive director.

“At this point, I would be surprised if that opportunity resurfaces,” Isom said Friday. “At this point, those vessels have pretty much settled in. So unless there’s a reason to move one of them, I don’t see them coming to Astoria.”

Isom said large, passenger-carrying cruise ships are more likely to be a part of a third phase of reopening the state, when there is a reliable treatment for the coronavirus.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian
Locals and tourists enjoy coffee and Columbia River views from seating outside of Coffee Girl at Pier 39 on Sunday morning.

Seating: ‘We’ve been adapting to rapid changes for two months’

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which has opened limited outdoor seating to reservations but shied away from opening its indoors to seating over virus concerns.

Sarah Lu Heath, the executive director of the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association, said the idea of making 13th Street pedestrian-only has been bandied about but lacks consensus from surrounding businesses on how to design

the concept. She pointed to parklets like the one on 11th Street as a more likely opportunity for businesses to expand outdoor seating beyond sidewalks.

“We’ve been adapting to rapid changes for two months,” she said of downtown businesses. “So I suspect that we might see some areas do it, but I don’t think we have a magic thoroughfare to close to Parisian-style cafe seating like some other areas do.”

SPOTLIGHT ON HEALTH Sponsored by Columbia Memorial Hospital



Foot pain? When to talk to a pro

The sun has returned and stay at home orders are easing. That means many of us are finally able to get outside again to exercise and play. If you haven’t been active for a few months, you may find that foot or ankle pain is standing in the way of your goals to be active.





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You are not alone. Many people experience similar pain as they begin new exercise routines, increase intensity of their routine, or extend the duration of training. Often, you just need to rest for a few days and then start more slowly. However, sometimes pain is a sign of more serious problems.

Here are some painful problems I see in my practice as a podiatrist, how to prevent them, and when to seek professional help.

Ankle Injuries

A misstep on the stairs or stepping off the curb can easily cause damage to ankle bone and ligaments. Sprains occur when the foot or ankle is twisted past its normal range of motion, injuring the supportive ligaments around the ankle bones. You may also have a fracture, when the bone breaks

instead of or in addition to the sprain.

What to do: Immediately following a sprain you should rest, ice, wrap it lightly with an ace bandage, and elevate the area. Make an appointment with a podiatrist to check for fractures. In some cases, surgery is necessary to repair damage to ligaments or bones.

Prevention: Ankle injuries can happen to anyone, but you can reduce your risk by wearing well-fitting shoes, maintaining a healthy weight, and exercising daily.

Stress Fractures

Increasing your physical activity will place more stress on the bones of your feet. This can cause small fractures, or cracks, in your bones. Pain, swelling, and bruising are all signs of stress fractures.

What to do: Stop the activity until the symptoms subside. Then start up again slowly. Without rest, you could cause a complete fracture of the bone. Call your local podiatrist for an evaluation if rest does not resolve the problem.

Prevention: Wear supportive shoes while exercising and after exercising. This may mean that it’s time to replace those old worn out shoes. Over time the cushioning and supportive materials in your shoes with break down. The typical lifespan of a good pair of running shoes is 300-500 miles.

When starting a new routine, gradually increase your mileage, duration, and intensity of exercise by less than 10 percent per week. For example, if your goal is to run a mar-

athon and you are currently running 10 miles per week, the following week you should only run 11 miles.

Heel Pain

Heel pain is commonly due to injury or inflammation of a ligament in your foot called the plantar fascia ligament. When this ligament becomes inflamed it is called plantar fasciitis. The pain is usually on the bottom of your heel and is most intense during the first few steps in the morning or when standing after sitting later in the day.

What to do: With heel pain, early treatment is always best. Start by stretching the foot, wear supportive shoes, and avoid walking barefoot. If the pain persists, it is time to see a podiatrist. In some cases, if left untreated, the pain may become persistent and last throughout the entire day.

Prevention: Take time to stretch your legs before going on a walk, hike, bike ride, or run. Wear supportive shoes to support your ligaments and prevent injury. Avoid walking barefoot.

Foot or ankle pain can derail our best intentions for being active. Please seek help from a medical professional if pain is keeping you from living a full and active lifestyle.

Dr. Adam Bingham is a podiatric surgeon. He earned his doctor of podiatric medicine degree from Des Moines University College of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery in Iowa. He and his family live in Seaside.