

DEAR ABBY

Write to Dear Abby online at dearabby.com or by mail at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069



Dear Abby: I have a much older sister who has become very religious. Most of her life decisions are based on her faith, so conversations tend to develop into faith-oriented topics and justifications. I don't initiate these conversations, and I make a genuine effort to understand her perspective. When I am not able to, I have mastered the "smile and nod."

My problem is, anytime I bring a friend or date to a family function, she drags them off to the side and begins to question and discuss the importance of faith. Since religion is a widely varied and highly sensitive topic, this can sometimes be uncomfortable. I recently asked her to stop doing it, and I haven't heard from her since. How can I explain healthy boundaries to her so we can have a respectful relationship?

—Younger Brother in Georgia

Dear Younger Brother: If part of your sister's religion is advancing it or converting others to her faith, you won't be able to convince her to stop. I agree that what she's doing can come across as obnoxious. Because you can't control what she says or does, you may have to stop bringing friends or dates to family functions where you know she'll be present. Otherwise, warn them in advance so they can either avoid being cornered or get away from her.

Dear Abby: My boyfriend was my first crush in grade eight. We are in our late 40s

now. He was in a relationship for 17 years with a woman who has three daughters. One hasn't talked to either parent in years. The other two drink, use drugs and have kids of their own. They often ask to "borrow" money, but never pay it back. One of them asked me for enough to put down a deposit for rent on a house. I have two of my own children and my exes don't support them, so I'm wondering how responsible I am for his ex-girlfriend's kids.

—Not Gonna Happen

Dear Not Gonna: You have no legal, moral or ethical obligation to the children your boyfriend raised with his former girlfriend. Stick to your guns, dear lady, because you are off the hook if you have the backbone to stay that way.

Dear Abby: I am a 50-year-old male. When I interact with a woman whose name I don't know, I address her as "Dear." Surprisingly, many of them respond in a negative way, regardless of age. Is it wrong to call someone "Dear"? And if so, what should I call them if I don't know their name?

—Unsure in Iowa

Dear Unsure: The women may respond the way they do because they consider being called "Dear" by a stranger to be overly familiar or even condescending. (Other titles to avoid would be "Honey" and "Young Lady," if the woman appears to be past the age of 30.) Be safe — and respectful — by addressing them as Miss or Ma'am.

Variant

Continued from A1

In contrast, Washington County, near Portland, reported 43 new cases and has vaccinated 75% of eligible adults. It's 2020 population is just over 620,000.

"The pandemic is fading for those that are vaccinated — they can resume activities with relative peace of mind," Allen said.

While significantly more contagious, the delta variant has not been shown to be any more virulent or able to break through vaccines that have been widely available since spring.

While infections and hospitalizations are rising, the number of deaths is expected to be capped well below levels seen last winter when the virus was rampant and no vaccines were available.

Allen said that despite Thursday's press call to publicize the extent of the delta variant, there were no plans for Brown or OHA to step in and exert control over local decisions.

While OHA was ready to help with additional vaccine and other supports, it is up to county health departments to take a measure of the local impact of the virus and for county commissioners to decide what should be done.

Salem would not issue edicts, but advice.

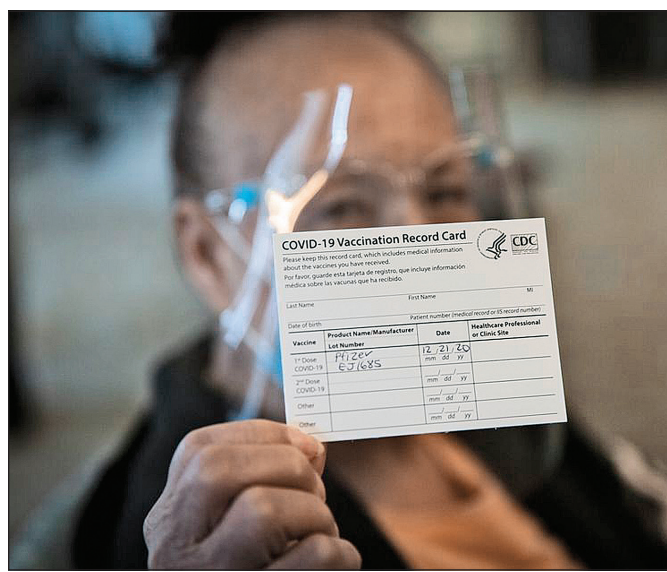
"Take action now," Allen said of counties with lagging vaccination rates.

Allen pointed to state statistics showing that 15 out of 36 counties had started vaccinating less than half their adult population. Statewide the number is about 70%.

Dean Sidelinger, the state health officer and chief epidemiologist, said the jump in infections should be a "red alert" for those who have not been vaccinated.

"You are at higher risk now than you were earlier in the pandemic, and you are putting the people around you at risk," Sidelinger said.

Not moving to increase vaccination levels would mean



Brooke Herbert/Oregonian file

A woman holds up her COVID-19 vaccination card.

the shadow of the pandemic would continue in communities, schools, workplaces and gatherings.

"The virus looms large," Sidelinger said.

OHA again said it was hoping for increased persuasion and for local influential individuals and political leaders to take action. There were no plans for new mandates, or to tell employers they should require vaccinations.

Citing the "highly political" nature of the COVID-19 debate, Allen said efforts to increase vaccinations had to come from trusted local sources, including civic and faith leaders, as well as political officeholders.

Asked directly if the state would step in to curb or cancel the Pendleton Round-Up in September if Umatilla County's infection rates stayed at current levels, Allen demurred.

"Two or three months in the future are an eternity" in the pandemic, he said.

Brown had said in June that the Round-Up would go on after a COVID-19 caused cancellation in 2020.

"Let 'er buck," Brown said, using a popular saying for the event.

But the statements were made at a time when COVID-19 infections were in steep decline.

Soon after the transfer of responsibility to counties, the

governor's office said it would monitor the response.

"Oregon is moving into the next chapter of this pandemic," Brown spokesman Charles Boyle said on July 7. "While our statewide response will now look different, OHA continues to have an ongoing leadership role working with local public health partners in vaccination efforts, as well as pandemic response and recovery."

Boyle said Brown was aware of the already rising impact of the Delta variant in other parts of the nation.

"We will continue to monitor the spread of variants closely," Boyle said.

While transferring daily control of the pandemic response to counties, Brown has not lifted the state emergency order that has been in place since March 2020 and renewed several times.

Allen said that getting people to realize the gravity of the pandemic and to make their own choices to get vaccinated was going to work best.

"I don't care what you think, you have to get vaccinated" was a message that wouldn't help anyone.

Asked if any Republican leaders in the state had stepped up to publicly push for vaccination, Allen said he had had conversations with many leaders of all political views and it was up to them to decide their public role.

"Let them speak for themselves," he said, adding, "Who are the right messengers? What is the right message?"

Up until June 30, the state had decided the risk level for infection in each county and what restrictions should be in place. Though Brown officially disconnected the risk analysis from state response, the statistics are still reported each Monday.

Statewide, the percentage of positive cases averaged 3.8% through the two-week period ending July 17. But in Umatilla County, the percentage was 12.4% and Morrow County was 14.4%.

In contrast, Multnomah County — which includes Portland — was 2%. Lane County — including Eugene — was 2.9%. And Deschutes County — including Bend — was 3.4%. But OHA reported even these small percentages were increases over the prior two-week periods going back to June 20.

Clatsop County, at 4%, was one of the few counties to report a drop in infections over the periods.

OHA on Wednesday posted an update showing the number of confirmed cases of the COVID-19 delta variant had more than doubled, from 43 to 90, between reports on July 10 and July 17.

OHA officials say the prevalence of the delta variant is likely an undercount as sequencing data can take weeks to be reported and not all coronavirus cases are tested for the variant.

COVID-19 has killed over 610,000 Americans and 4.1 million people worldwide. Many of the variants have had their origins thousands of miles away from Oregon, but in modern times, can reach anywhere on the globe in a relatively short time.

Sidelinger said the pandemic has had many turning points for bad and good.

Thinking that it is defeated would "come at a high cost." "Our fight is not over," he said. "COVID-19 is a stubborn foe."

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YOUR HOROSCOPE By Georgia Nicols

Stars show the kind of day you'll have

★★★★ DYNAMIC | ★★★ POSITIVE | ★★ AVERAGE | ★ SO-SO | ★ DIFFICULT

MOON ALERT: CAUTION: Avoid shopping or making important decisions from noon until 8:30 p.m. EDT today (9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. PDT). After that, the Moon moves from Capricorn into Aquarius.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR FRIDAY, JULY 23, 2021: You are a strong individual with your own take on things. You have a great imagination and love to seek out stimulation and adventure. This is a powerful year for you. It's a year where you can attain accolades, praise or promotions. You also might attain personal or financial gain. Expect achievements and rewards. It's time to alphabetize your blessings!

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★ Today you might have an intense encounter with an authority figure — a parent, boss, teacher or member of the police. If so, this encounter will be intense. You might feel overwhelmed by your feelings. Meanwhile, most of this day is a Moon Alert. Tread carefully! Tonight: Talk to a friend.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★ Today it's easy to be obsessed with an idea, which is why it is wise to avoid discussions about politics, racial issues and religion. Your emotions will be too strong! Feelings will run high and arguments will ensue. Meanwhile, check the Moon Alert. Tonight: People notice you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★ Because most of this day is a Moon Alert, avoid important decisions about shared responsibilities, shared money, taxes, debt, loans and mortgages. This is not the day to discuss these matters. Forewarned is forearmed. Tonight: Change your routine

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★ A discussion with someone close to you could be intense today. Both parties might feel obsessed and stuck in their own point of view or their desires. You might be at a standoff. Check the Moon Alert and postpone important decisions. Tonight: Check your finances.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★ Today you're willing to work hard. You also might be focused on your health. However, it's easy to be obsessed with an idea today. Furthermore, most of this day is a Moon Alert. Bad combo! Hmmm, it's a poor day to make decisions, and someone is obsessed. Tonight: Be cooperative.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★ Difficulties with romance might arise today because people are intense, even obsessed. Meanwhile, today is a Moon Alert, which means it's a poor time to make a decision, and yet, feelings are running high. This also applies to sports and relations with your kids. Tonight: Do some work.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★ Avoid intense discussions with family today, because they will be pointless. Nevertheless, someone might be obsessed about something, which is hard to ignore. Because today is a Moon Alert, table these discussions for another day. Tonight: Relax.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★ Don't try to convince someone to agree with you no matter how intensely you believe that you are right. Today everyone is inclined to be obsessed about something. Furthermore, today is a Moon Alert. Just coast. (For today.) Tonight: Cocoon at home.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★ You have strong ideas about financial matters today or something you own. However, this is a poor day to take a stand, because most of this day is a Moon Alert. Instead, take a breather. Allow this situation some space. Decide tomorrow. Tonight: Stay calm.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★ Today the Moon is in your sign lined up with Pluto, which will create an emotional experience for you. You might become obsessed about a particular idea, especially if you're dealing with a female. Note the Moon Alert today and lighten up. Wait until it's over. Tonight: Protect possessions.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ Some deep secrets might be revealed today. This could be connected to an obsession you have or an intense kind of research. Do not be persuaded by information that is questionable. Most of today is a Moon Alert. Lighten up and get some perspective. Tonight: Be reasonable.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★ You might have an intense discussion with a friend or a group. You might be at loggerheads because each of you is obsessed with your point of view. Obviously, this will go nowhere. Therefore, and especially because most of today is a Moon Alert, back off. Tonight: Stay calm.

Budget

Continued from A1

About \$1 million comes from interfund transfers, which means a certain amount of money will be transferred from several city departments to communally support the cost of new staff positions.

This proposed budget adjustment includes \$7.5 million to pay for a navigation center for homeless residents, renovation costs for turning the Bend Value Inn into a homeless shelter, and additional funding to help cover the costs of proposed affordable housing projects in Bend.

About \$3 million of this is from American Rescue Plan funding.

About \$1.5 million is proposed to be used to create one or more managed homeless camps within the city, according to a presentation from the city Wednesday night.

The goal would be to create about three camps around the city and run them for about a year and a half, said Carolyn Eagan, the city's economic development director, during Wednesday's City Council meeting.

Another \$4.2 million is proposed to add staff to help with processing building permits, community relations and a cyber security person, according to a presentation from the city.

About \$1 million of this money would go toward filling positions that the city left vacant last year as a way to save money when the pandemic hit and caused economic uncertainty.

Other recommendations include \$1.2 million to go toward utility assistance, child care, nonprofits and a more robust effort to plan for the future of downtown.

About \$200,000 is also allocated for transportation maintenance.

The council will formally vote on this budget allocation at its Aug. 18 meeting.

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