

CDC recommends people wear homemade masks in public

Grant County Health Department

The COVID-19 situation is evolving. Projections from health researchers show that there is “strong evidence that measures currently in place in Oregon are reducing transmission,” according to the latest models. The most recent data suggest that current physical distancing measures could cut transmission rates between 50%-70% if Oregonians maintain physical distancing into early May. As of Monday, 44 COVID-19 tests have been administered in Grant County with one positive results, 29 negative results, 11 pending results and three untestable specimens that were properly packed on dry ice as

indicated but were delivered too late by the courier. We have been using the term “social distancing” to describe staying 6 feet apart from others. Following the World Health Organization, we are now using the term “physical distancing” because it more clearly describes keeping physically separated from others — 6 feet apart. Physical distancing can prevent the virus from transferring to others, but it’s important that we keep our social and community connections. We encourage people to maintain social connection in ways that still maintain physical distance by connecting with each other through the internet and by phone. We are all better at managing stress when we stay connected with

our friends and people we love. In light of the CDC’s new guidance on homemade masks or cloth face coverings, Oregon Health Authority is reminding Oregonians that staying home and avoiding all non-essential contact with others continues to be the most important thing all of us can do to stay healthy and keep others healthy. People are wondering if homemade masks can help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Homemade masks are not known to be effective in protecting the wearer against infection. Therefore, OHA does not recommend that healthcare personnel wear these masks when taking care of sick patients. Medical masks should be reserved for health care providers who

are on the front lines working with patients who are most likely to have COVID-19. We have had shortages of those masks — and it’s critically important that our health care workers have the equipment they need to do their jobs. However, if cloth masks are worn by a sick person, particularly with respiratory symptoms such as coughing or sneezing, they could reduce the spread of the virus. Homemade masks are not considered PPE, since their capability to protect against COVID-19 is unknown. The use of cloth face coverings may reduce the spread of virus and help prevent those who have the virus but do not have symptoms from passing it to others. Still, the most effective means of prevent-

ing the spread of COVID-19 is staying home and avoiding all non-essential contact with others. It can be difficult to locate a mask or face covering; if you are unable to locate one, you can make your own using the instructions at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>. There are instructions for making masks or face coverings with or without sewing. Together we can minimize the impact of COVID-19 on our most vulnerable community members and help ensure our health systems will work for all of us when we need it most. We appreciate your help in this effort.

Maintain physical distance in warmer weather

Grant County Health Department

In the days ahead, we are going to experience sunshine and warm weather in most of Oregon. Understandably, many of us will want to go outside and feel the warmth of the sun. Going outside is good for you. Although the weather is nice we still need you to stay home and limit travel to essential trips. Here are some ideas on how you enjoy the sun and still flatten the curve:

- If you’re able to maintain physical distancing, enjoy the outdoor areas of your residence.
- Have an outdoor picnic at your residence with the people you live with.
- Have a virtual picnic with friends.
- Get things done at home such as gardening or washing your car.
- Open doors and windows to get fresh air while remaining inside.

We need to keep our momentum

going in flattening the curve. It’s still important to continue physical distancing and remain 6 feet away from others. When enjoying this beautiful weather, please don’t:

- Participate in group sports
- Hike on crowded trails
- Attend social gatherings
- Travel
- And, please don’t go out if you’re sick.

We must not stop doing our part. Oregon has been doing great but we can’t let up now. The steps we’re taking are saving lives and we need to keep this momentum going!

The guidance to exercising outdoors has not changed. It is allowed if physical distancing is possible:

- Enjoy solo physical activities or those with members of your immediate household such as walking, biking, running or rolling.
- Wave to your neighbors from a distance. Let them know you’re happy to see them.

Federal changes temporarily increase access to food benefits

Blue Mountain Eagle

Oregonians who have difficulty finding work during the COVID-19 pandemic do not have to worry about losing their food benefits, due to changes included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Normally, benefits are only available for three months for people who are not working but are considered able to work, according to a press release. The act temporarily suspends Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program time limits for a subset of the SNAP population who are required to seek work as a condition of receiving benefits. The changes began April 1 and ends the month after the secretary of Health and Human Services declares the COVID-19 state of emergency is lifted. “SNAP benefits play a critical role in helping Oregonians get by during difficult circumstances,” said Dan Haun, director of Self-Sufficiency Programs at the Oregon Department of Human Services. “This change ensures that food

benefits remain available for the increasingly number of Oregonians losing jobs during this pandemic.” “As business and schools close because of this public health crisis, Oregonians are losing work and wages. SNAP is there to help put food on the table,” said Annie Kirschner, executive director of Hunger-Free Oregon. “By waiving SNAP time limits, more Oregonians can now focus on staying healthy, instead of the threat of hunger.” DHS announced that Oregonians statewide now can use their SNAP benefits online to buy groceries at Amazon or Wal-Mart, which support the physical distancing required by Gov. Kate Brown’s stay home order. In addition, DHS is not requiring interviews for those who report having no household income. Oregonians can apply for SNAP without visiting a DHS office online at OHP.Oregon.gov. “Whether you’re experiencing job loss for the first time, or you’ve been struggling to make ends meet for a while, we want you to know about all the options open to you,” said Susannah Morgan,

Oregon Food Bank CEO. “SNAP food assistance is our region’s most effective defense against hunger — especially in times of crisis. It’s an important resource that can feed families and help prevent hunger from becoming yet another symptom of COVID-19.” SNAP is a federally funded program that offers nutrition assistance to low-income individuals and families. SNAP is the largest program in the domestic hunger safety net. In Oregon, individuals and families apply for SNAP benefits at Department of Human Services and Area Agency on Aging offices across the state. If someone lost SNAP benefits due to time limit work requirements, they are encouraged to reapply. SNAP customers can contact their local DHS or AAA office for more information. Find a local office at oregon.gov/DHS/Offices/Pages/index.aspx. For other ways to connect with DHS, contact 211info: by calling 2-1-1 from any phone; by texting your zip code to 898211; or by emailing help@211info.org.

Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.

Grant County Circuit Court

Bobby L. Ruston, 42, pleaded guilty April 8 to five counts of first-degree burglary committed on Dec. 3, Dec. 12, Dec. 26 and March 6, and four counts of second-degree burglary committed on Dec. 3, Dec. 12, Dec. 26 and March 6. He was sentenced to serve 31 months in jail, 24 months of post-prison supervision and pay \$4,252.87 in restitution: \$625 to Dark Horse Antiques, \$159.09 to Grant

Soil and Water Conservation District, \$1,392 to High Desert Office Supply, \$1,500 to John Day Video Shoppe, \$189 to Jonna Radinovich and \$387.78 to Natural Resources Conservation Services. Two counts of second-degree criminal mischief, two counts of third-degree criminal mischief, one count of second-degree burglary, a count of third-degree theft and a count of felon in possession of a firearm were dismissed.

Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff’s Office reported the following for the week of April 8:

Concealed handgun licenses: 0
Average inmates: 13

Bookings: 1
Releases: 2
Arrests: 0
Citations: 0
Fingerprints: 0
Civil papers: 4
Warrants processed: 0
Assistance/Welfare check: 0
Search and Rescue: 1

Oregon State Police

April 9: OSP began investigating an unreported theft of a firearm from a rural Mt. Vernon residence. The property owner acknowledged the theft had occurred, but the firearm belonged to an ex-wife. OSP contacted the owner of the firearm who was unaware it was stolen and wished to file a report. On April 9, OSP was

able to obtain the serial number of the firearm, and OSP had dispatch enter it into LEDS/NCIC as stolen. Investigation is ongoing.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 119 calls during the week of April 6 to April 12, including:

- **John Day Police Department**
April 6: Responded to a report of a domestic dispute on West Main Street.
April 10: Received a report of burglary on Southeast Hillcrest Road.
April 10: Received a report of a credit card fraud on Skyline Road.
April 10: Responded to assist Juniper Ridge with a

- client who was assaulting caregivers.
- **Oregon State Police**
April 8: Advised of a cow elk that was hit and injured on Highway 7.
April 11: Advised of livestock on the roadway at Ritter Junction.
- **Grant County Sheriff’s Office**
April 7: Received a report of criminal mischief on Highway 26.
April 11: Received a report of theft in Seneca.
April 11: Received a report of theft on South Humbolt Street.
- **John Day ambulance**
April 6: Dispatched for a man with injury on South Canyon Boulevard.

- April 7: Dispatched for a woman that fell with a possible broken bone on Highland Terrace.
- April 9: Along with Monument ambulance, responded to a man who blacked out on 11th Street.
- April 10: Dispatched for a woman with high blood pressure on La Costa Road.
- April 10: Dispatched for a man with a racing heart and high blood pressure at a business on West Main Street.
- April 11: Dispatched for a woman with difficulty breathing and a fever.
- **John Day fire**
April 10: Along with Canyon City fire, responded to a house fire at Riverside Mobile Home Park.

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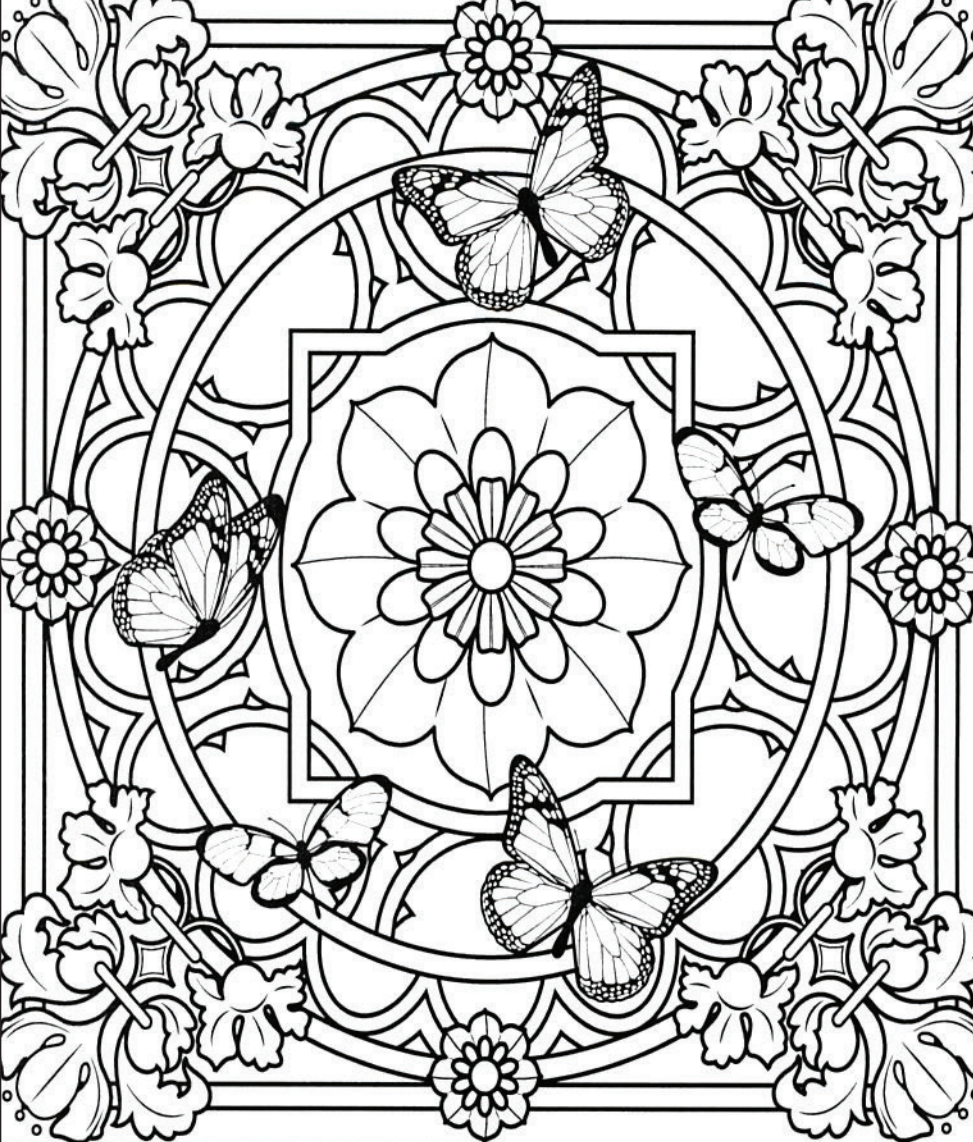
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