



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 20, 2020**

Current COVID-19 case count

Scott County – Total of 1,912

Total deaths in Scott County: 17

Rock Island County – 15 new cases since Wednesday; total of 1,979

Currently in hospital: 8

Total deaths in Rock Island County: 50

Today's call

A video recording of today's media briefing can be found at

<https://www.scottcountyiowa.com/health/covid19/news>

Rising number of COVID-19 deaths

Remarks from Edward Rivers, director of the Scott County Health Department

Our community is still dealing with the fallout from the surge in COVID-19 cases that took place during the month of July. The fallout includes an increase in deaths, an increase in long-term care cases, and additional pressure to ensure safety as children return to the school setting.

Since August 1, the Quad Cities area has experienced # of COVID-related deaths. Deaths are a lagging indicator of the severity of COVID-19 in our community. We believe these deaths are connected to the increased virus spread that led to the spike in cases in July. Increased spread of the virus puts the most vulnerable in our communities at additional risk for severe illness and death.

Additionally, Scott County has experienced its second outbreak in a long-term care facility. Ridgecrest Village, in coordination with the Scott County Health Department and Iowa Department of Public Health, have identified a total of three cases of COVID-19 in residents and staff at their long-term care facility in Scott County. According to the Iowa Department of Public Health, an outbreak occurs when three or more cases of COVID-19 are identified among residents of a facility. No deaths have been associated with this outbreak.

The facility has notified residents and their families, and consistent with IDPH guidelines, the affected residents are in isolation. Ridgecrest Village staff are working closely with Scott County Health Department to protect the health of all residents and staff.

Our focus of today's briefing will be on children in the school setting. In addition to the pressure of developing solid plans to resume in-person instruction during a pandemic, our

school districts have the added stress of monitoring our community's unstable COVID-19 case counts. In reality, this translates to administrators and families preparing themselves for the certainty that COVID-19 cases will be found in schools. Our local schools have extensive plans in place to lessen the chances of COVID-19 exposure to students, teachers, and staff while in the school setting. However, COVID-19 is still spreading in our community and our schools will not be immune.

Families should plan ahead for school outbreaks

Remarks from Janet Hill, chief operating officer, Rock Island County Health Department

We are encouraging all families with school-aged children to plan ahead for how they will handle child care, work, and other duties should their child be excluded from school because they are found to have COVID-19 or are told their child is a contact to an individual with COVID-19.

Families are encouraged to:

- Talk with your employer about policies that are in place should you need to be away from work to care for your child.
- Find someone to care for your child during this time and make sure the individual you choose is not at high risk of severe illness should they get COVID-19 (elderly, preexisting health conditions, etc.).
- Plan for how you will meet household needs during this time (grocery shopping using curbside pick-up, delivery; pharmacy trips).

The following scenarios related to COVID-19 would require a child to be out of school for a set time period:

- If your child tests positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19, the child will need to stay home for a minimum of 10 days.
- If your child has been exposed to or is a close contact of an individual with COVID-19, either in the school setting or from an exposure outside of the school setting, the child will need to stay home for a period of 14 days.

School is not the only setting where children will be in contact with others outside of their household and therefore at risk for COVID-19. Families have lives outside of school as well. We encourage families to take a look at the activities they participate in outside of the school setting. We all enjoy family gatherings, slumber parties, outdoor barbeques with neighbors, but these types of activities increase the risk of being exposed to COVID-19. Because it can take 2-14 days before an individual develops symptoms or even knows he/she has COVID-19, a child could unknowingly bring the virus to school and expose others.

Beyond staying at home with members of your household only, there are hardly any activities that have no COVID-19 risk. So please, just be careful as to which activities you and your family participate in.

We encourage everyone in our community to support our schools and extend them grace during these challenging times. Our school administrators and staff have invested countless time and effort into being prepared to respond to endless numbers of scenarios related to COVID-19 that could come their way. Please know that both the Rock Island and Scott County Health Departments will support our local schools and their families every step of the way.

Please do your part. Talk with your children about the importance of following the precautions schools are putting in place, such as wearing masks and distancing of students in the school setting. Have them practice wearing masks for longer times now. Don't wait until the first day of in-person school. Explain to them the importance of handwashing and covering their coughs. And please, please make sure you keep your children home when they show signs of illness.

We know this isn't what we had hoped the start of the school year would look like. My sweet little niece started kindergarten this week. Her mom took the requisite first day of school photo outside and then they sat down at the kitchen table to log into her Zoom lesson. That isn't how it's supposed to be. It's OK to mourn what should have been. It's not OK to ignore our reality and forge ahead like nothing has changed. Our kids take their cues from us. Please help them adapt, both physically and mentally. Grace and compassion will go a long way to making this scary time a little easier.

Families should plan ahead for school outbreaks

Remarks from Dr. Daniel Arnold, UnityPoint Clinic physician

What symptoms, etc. are you currently seeing in school age youth with COVID-19?

- Children who contract COVID-19 usually develop flu-like symptoms, such as fever, cough, runny nose, muscle pain, fatigue, sore throat or headache.
- Many children have mild or undetected cases of the disease.
- Serious illness from COVID-19 is possible, so parents should stay alert.

What are some tips for parents to know when a sick child could be sick with COVID-19? When should a symptom prompt them to get their child tested?

- If your child develops any of these symptoms, it's best to call your primary care provider and they can direct you on the best course of action.
- UnityPoint Clinic Express Care also is available for testing if you have symptoms. You can find more information about the various Express Care locations at unitypoint.org.
- Please also note that currently only symptomatic patients are being tested at UnityPoint Health facilities. It's not the recommendation for asymptomatic students to be tested for COVID-19 if someone else in their class tests positive.

What are providers preparing for regarding COVID-19 during/at the same time as influenza season?

- It is still very important for everyone to get their flu shot because we want to be as prepared as possible with COVID-19 still spreading through the community.
- This is not the year to skip the shot because you don't want risk having to battle both illnesses.
- For pediatric patients who require two doses of the flu vaccine, we recommended they get the first dose when the vaccines arrive (next week or two) so they can receive the second dose by October.

How will prevention measures we are encouraging for COVID-19 (masks, social distancing, handwashing) be beneficial for influenza season, etc.?

- The good news is that a lot of our precautions around COVID-19 should also help during flu season (i.e. masking, physical distancing, disinfecting)
- Taking care of your health and hygiene is what we ask people to do every year for flu season, and this year we just had to apply those same principles to COVID-19 because it is a new disease and we knew less about it.
- We continue to learn more about COVID every day, but everyone should take these precautions regardless of what disease you're trying to protect you and your loved ones from.

What are ways to help kids adjust to wearing a mask?

- **Be consistent.** Remind kids to wear their masks, just like you. Encourage them to avoid touching the mask and keep it over their mouth and nose.
- **Explain why.** Even very young kids will understand masks are important to help keep everyone safe.
- **Personalize.** Let your children pick out kid-friendly masks with characters and cool designs or encourage them to decorate their own with things like tie-dye or fabric markers.
- **Take a picture.** Snap a photo of your child in a mask and reinforce how awesome he/she looks. You can even opt for a family photo, or simply look in a mirror together. Drawing a self-portrait also works.
- **Practice at home.** Get the whole family involved in practicing mask wearing for a day, or a few hours, to get the hang of it. (TIP: Don't forget to practice eating. That can be tricky.)
- **Use masks in play.** For younger kids, put masks on stuffed animals or dolls during play time.
- **See masks in action.** While it's still best to avoid public spaces as much as possible, consider taking your child out to a safe space where people are wearing masks to help normalize mask wearing.
- **Identify good behavior.** Point out others who are doing a good job wearing masks.

More information

- www.TogetherQC.com
- coronavirus.iowa.gov
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=2>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Rock%20Island>
- <https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/facilities/Pages/Covid19Response.aspx>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/long-term-care-facility-outbreaks-covid-19>

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