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WOU Community Health + Polk County COVID-19 Project: Contact Tracing Efforts

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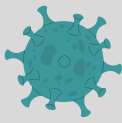
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What is COVID-19?

It's an infectious disease that is primarily transmitted through respiratory droplets and aerosols produced when an infected person talks, breathes, sneezes or coughs.

COVID-19 in Polk County:

- **3,772** total cases
- **11** average cases per day in the past week
- **53** total of deaths
- **45%** of residents 18+ are vaccinated



as of 5/13/2021



"I'm a contact tracer because I enjoy supporting my community and making sure individuals and families stay safe and healthy during this time" - Sarah

Our Contact Tracing Team

- WOU Community Health Majors
- 11 current contact tracers
- 7 bilingual contact tracers
- Languages spoken by our team: Spanish, Ilokano, Tagalog and English
- Over 4,084 individuals monitored since September 1, 2020

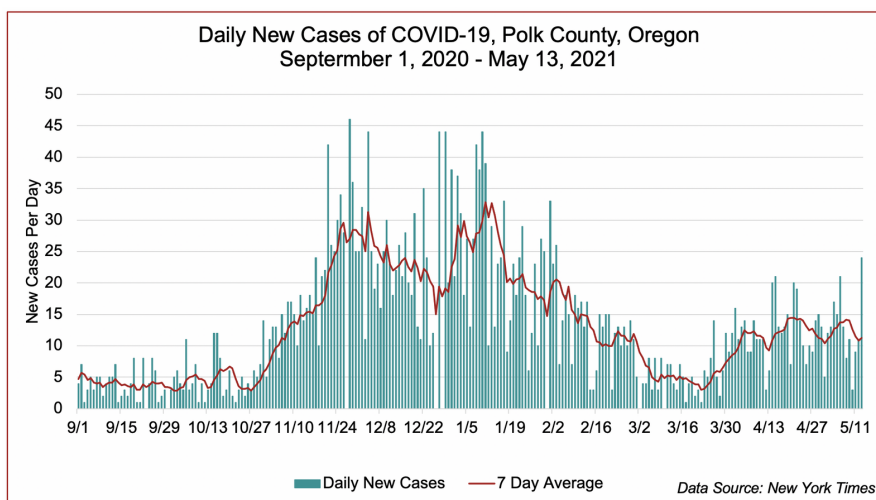
What is Contact Tracing?

Contact tracing is the process of notifying individuals of their exposure to a specific disease. In this case, we notify individuals of their exposure to COVID-19. Exposed individuals should self-quarantine for 14 days from their last exposure and monitor for symptoms.

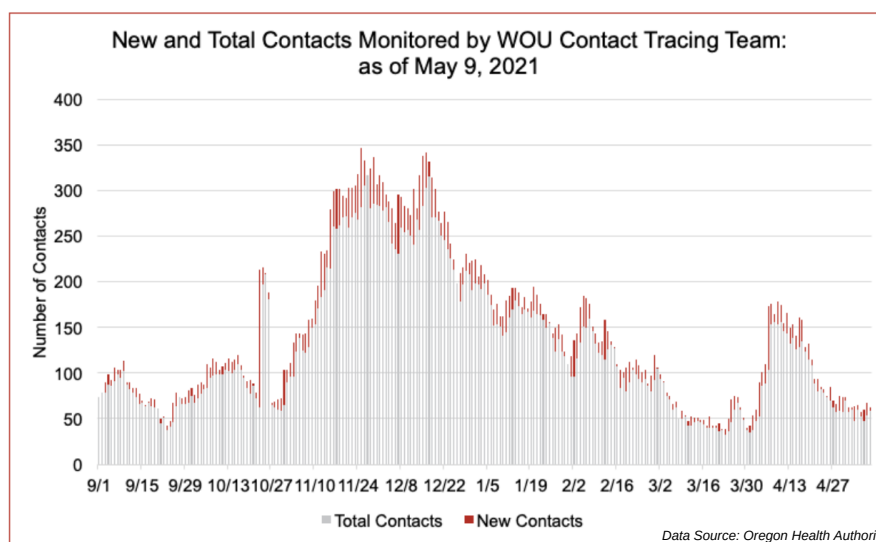


Contact tracing has been used to stop the spread of diseases since the early 1920s. It plays a vital role in preventing disease transmission within communities.

In July 2020, WOU Community Health faculty and students partnered with Polk County Public Health to assist with contact tracing efforts in the community.



The "Daily New Cases" graph shows the wave of cases in Polk County during post-holiday months from November to January. A post-spring break surge also occurred in March.



The "New and Total Contacts Monitored" graph reflects the surges in Polk County that occurred during the post-holiday and post-spring break surges.

Becoming a Contact Tracer in Polk County

- Oregon Health Authority 7-hour Contact Tracing Training.
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Training
 - To ensure confidentiality, work phones are issued to each team member.
- At Risk Identification Alerting System (ARIAS) Training, which is the database used to monitor exposed individuals during their quarantine period.



Karissa, Sarah, Queenie, Mariana, & Jackie

A Day in the Life of a Contact Tracer

1:30 PM

- New contacts are assigned to each member of the contact tracing team.

2:00 PM

- Contact tracers prepare their day with the contact tracing materials.
 - Open ARIAS, scripts, contact tracer schedule, community based organization resources, and contact tracing guidance and updates.
- Inform new contacts of their last exposure, verify information, explain end of quarantine, and set them up with daily monitoring.
- Lastly, we refer individuals to community resources that can help with rent, utilities and groceries.

Lessons Learned:

- The importance of communicating effectively with diverse audiences.
- Establishing relationships with community partners to promote the well-being of individuals.
- How the community comes together as one, to support each other during a difficult time.
- Ability to show empathy for individuals while maintaining professional boundaries.
- The role of Public Health and how we as contact tracers can make a difference and decrease the spread of disease in our community.

Positions Our Team Have Moved on To:

- Community Health Workers at Polk, Benton, Linn County Public Health, and Good Samaritan Hospital.
- Master of Public Health Programs, Oregon State University
- Bachelor in Nursing at OHSU and Linfield
- Health Services Supervisor at Family Building Blocks

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Click [here](#) for more information on the WOU COVID-19 Project.

Partners

