



# MEDIA RELEASE

## San Juan County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 30, 2021

### Weekly Case Update

*Note: Current positive case numbers are available online at the [County Case Data Dashboard](#). As indicated on that page, these numbers are only updated after case confirmation is complete, usually daily. It is possible that other information sources in community may be quicker to report on new cases, but ensuring privacy and accuracy is critical for this official information source.*

Since the [last update](#) on Friday APRIL 16th, total cases in San Juan County have increased from 173 to 176.

Note that there are 12 close contacts of positive cases currently in active quarantine.

#### SHAW ISLAND

There are no new cases on Shaw Island since the last update.

There are no confirmed positive cases under active monitoring on Shaw Island at this time.

#### ORCAS ISLAND

There is one new case on Orcas Island since the last update. The following details are known about this new case:

-The transmission source for this new case is related to off-island travel with close contact with a subsequently confirmed positive case.

There is one confirmed positive case under active monitoring on Orcas Island at this time.

#### LOPEZ ISLAND

There are no new cases on Lopez Island since the last update.

There are no confirmed positive cases under active monitoring on Lopez Island at this time.

#### SAN JUAN ISLAND

There are two new cases on San Juan Island since the last update. The following details are known about these cases:

-Both new cases are close household members of each other. The transmission source is related to off-island travel with close contact with a subsequently confirmed positive case.

There are four positive cases under active monitoring on San Juan Island at this time.

#### OVERALL PICTURE:

**First off, if you're not vaccinated – DO IT NOW.** While large scale island vaccine clinics are winding down due to drastically decreased demand, there will still be regular opportunities for walk-up vaccinations going forward. No registration required. Please monitor [www.sjccovid.com](http://www.sjccovid.com) for details.

**Note on vaccinations and children:** Children age 16 and up are eligible for vaccination, but 16 and 17 year-

olds require the Pfizer vaccine, which has not been offered in the islands to date. The County COVID vaccine team is actively working on plans to bring that vaccine to the islands in May. There is hope that the Pfizer vaccine will be approved for ages 12 and up before summer.

**Vaccination rates in the islands:** After the large clinics earlier this week, about 66% of islanders have now initiated their vaccination. This is an incredibly encouraging number, especially when you consider that approximately 2,000 islanders (kids) are not eligible for the vaccine. This means that approximately 75% of islanders who are eligible to receive the vaccine have done so. This is far and away the highest rate in WA, and quite possibly beyond. These numbers are approximations and are constantly being adjusted as new data is available, but no matter how you cut it, the islands are in tremendous shape and well ahead of schedule.

### **The current situation:**

**Cases on San Juan Island:** We can now safely say that the San Juan Island outbreak is behind us. Two clear lessons that resulted: One, illness can spread quickly via close indoor unmasked contact. We knew this of course, but this was a clear example. Two, if safety precautions are followed, schools are a relatively risk-free environment. Despite ample opportunity for school spread- masking, quick contact tracing, and a school that prioritized safe operations resulted in zero evidence for school-based spread. This is a good lesson going forward and a reassuring real-life confirmation that schools can remain open and operate safely, even when positive cases appear in the school community.

**Risks going forward:** Cases in Washington are still spiking. Every County neighboring San Juan is seeing sharp increases in cases. Even though those who are vaccinated are relaxing, those who are not vaccinated (including our kids) are still at significant risk from the disease. We all know how to prevent spread by now:

1. If you are unvaccinated and choose to socialize indoors with unvaccinated individuals, you are at high risk. The choice is yours, but please ensure you minimize your exposure to other families, the community, and co-workers who may be vulnerable.
2. Similarly, if you are unvaccinated and travel in a high-risk way, or host unvaccinated guests from off-island, you are engaging in high risk behavior, and should minimize your exposure for 14 days after.
3. Until our kids are vaccinated, they are our greatest risk for getting and spreading the disease. While everyone needs to get vaccinated, those who are in close contact with kids for any reason are at the highest risk of exposure and need to get their shot.
4. Hopefully as vaccination rates continue to rise, we will see decreasing case volumes and the current surge will flatten and then decline. Until then, COVID is out there, it is common, and anyone unvaccinated needs to remain thoughtful about the risks they take and the risks they share with others.
5. As we head into summer, we need to remember the lessons from the previous year: casual island visitors who we may see in the street, pass at the grocery store, or see walking on a trail we are using are NOT a significant cause for concern. The greatest risk to the islands is from unvaccinated islanders welcoming unvaccinated visitors into their homes, or unvaccinated islanders traveling and bringing the disease back home.

**So:** there's lots of cause for optimism but it is far too soon to relax. Even if you are vaccinated, you have to be thoughtful, and if you have chosen to not be vaccinated, or are under the age of 18, you need to be especially careful- for the community, but especially for yourself. COVID is serious, and the more we learn about it, the more aware we are of its long-term impacts on our health.