



# MEDIA RELEASE

## San Juan County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 17, 2021

### Weekly Case Update

Since the [last update](#) on Friday December 10th, there have been 16 new confirmed or probable cases in San Juan County. Current case count is now 466. While the transmission source is not known for all these cases, a number are tied to recent holiday travel or recent family/friend gatherings.

There are approximately seven unvaccinated close contacts of positive cases currently in quarantine in the islands. Three of the sixteen new cases have been identified as being fully vaccinated.

LOPEZ ISLAND: There is one new case on Lopez Island since the last update. There are no positive cases under active monitoring on Lopez Island at this time.

ORCAS ISLAND: There are twelve new cases on Orcas Island since the last update. There are ten positive cases under active monitoring on Orcas Island.

SAN JUAN ISLAND: There is one new case on San Juan Island since the last update. There is one positive case under active monitoring on San Juan Island at this time.

NOTE: Two of the sixteen new cases have not yet been located to a specific island.

NOTE ON HOLIDAY GATHERING AND TRAVEL: At this point it seems clear that the new Omicron variant will cause a surge in cases. While we don't know exactly what that means for hospitalizations, and ultimately deaths, it is certainly a cause for concern. Quick thoughts:

1. Omicron is in Western WA, and likely is in the islands. This will almost certainly lead to cases moving quickly through family groups and those socializing indoors unmasked. As with previous variants, being vaccinated offers good protection against serious illness.
2. Now is a good time to be more cautious about masking in the workplace, making smart decisions around socializing indoors, and being especially thoughtful about avoiding exposing those who are unvaccinated or high risk to the illness.
3. Using at home test kits to minimize risk is smart. Having people test before gathering, testing quickly when symptomatic, or following up any potential exposure with testing makes great sense. The County Health team has been giving away thousands of kits this week, and test kits may be available online or in-person at local and regional pharmacies as well.
4. A rise in cases is coming, and it may be quite dramatic. However, for those who are fully vaccinated and are following the usual precautions, there is no cause for panic or fear. The vast majority of islanders are perfectly situated to weather this next round of cases extremely well.