

**Jefferson County****Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

# Central Oregon Public Health Monthly Update

March 29, 2024

**Spring is a Great Time to get Smoke Ready**



## What to know about smoke during prescribed fire season

The arrival of spring brings many welcome changes to Central Oregon, such as warmer weather and longer days. Many of us start cleaning house and working in the yard or garden during spring. It is also the best time to get ready for wildfire smoke season.

Land managers with Deschutes National Forest, Ochoco National Forest, and Crooked River Grasslands take advantage of Spring conditions to conduct **prescribed burns** on the forest. While prescribed burns are a key tool to protect the community, they can cause smoke impacts which reduce air quality and are harmful to health.

Prescribed and wildfire smoke is harmful to everyone's health. The number one recommendation, for all of us, is to limit our exposure. Some people

may be more impacted by poor air quality including older adults, people with health conditions, and children.

### **How to Protect your Health from Smoke during Prescribed Burn Season and Wildfire Season**

- Stay informed about planned burn activity. Bookmark the [Central Oregon Fire](#) website. Sign up for text message alerts by texting "COFIRE" to 888-777.
- Be sure to close windows and doors overnight when burns are taking place. Smoke tends to settle and can cause worse air quality. Talk with your health care team and make a plan for how to manage your health conditions when it is smoky.
- Check [air quality reports](#) and [monitors](#) for real-time information about current and expected air quality.
- Be willing to change outdoor activities to avoid smoke. Protecting your health can be as simple as taking an afternoon walk instead of going in the morning.
- Keep [indoor air as clean](#) as possible. Consider using an air purifier or upgrading your HVAC filter, you can make [a filter fan](#) at low cost.
- Consider wearing an [N95 mask](#) for extreme smoke or long periods of time outside.
- Call [211](#) to find cleaner indoor air spaces if you don't have access to clean indoor air.





Now is the time to be thinking about how to stay safe when it is smoky! Smoke during prescribed fires is something we can plan for. Planning early allows us to be ready during wildfire season, when smoke can show up without warning and stick around for longer. Learn more about protecting your health from [smoke](#).

### **Spring Chicks Pose Salmonella Risk**

As springtime brings warmer weather and a flurry of changes to the high desert, families in our community eagerly welcome new chicks home for fresh eggs. However, amidst the excitement of nurturing these adorable chicks, it's crucial to remember a health caution: handling live poultry can expose you to salmonella, which can lead to illness. It's important to stay informed about how to minimize this health risk for both yourself and your feathered companions.

## After you touch ducklings or chicks, wash your hands so you don't get sick!



-  Contact with live poultry (chicks, chickens, ducklings, ducks, geese, and turkeys) can be a source of human *Salmonella* infections.
-  *Salmonella* germs can cause a diarrheal illness in people that can be mild, severe, or even life threatening.
-  Chicks, ducklings, and other live poultry can carry *Salmonella* germs and still appear healthy and clean.
-  *Salmonella* germs are shed in their droppings and can easily contaminate their bodies and anything in areas where birds live and roam.

Meet Tyler, who resides in a rural community with his family. They're active, have a love for the outdoors and a passion for caring for their pets which includes a flock of backyard chickens that provide them with fresh eggs.

In 2016, excitement filled the household as they welcomed new baby chicks. Tyler, then in kindergarten, adored visiting the chicks in the basement under a heat lamp. He loved holding them close and watching them grow.

However, shortly thereafter, Tyler started experiencing unexplained stomachaches, prompting multiple visits to both the school nurse and doctor. Despite diligent efforts, Tyler's symptoms persisted and deteriorated over time, ultimately resulting in the presence of blood in his stool. After a long stressful period, Tyler was diagnosed with a *Salmonella* infection traced back to the baby chicks. With the right treatment, Tyler eventually made a full recovery, returning to his vibrant self. After this happened, Tyler's family made changes to ensure their safety around their chickens. They no longer keep baby chicks indoors, and Tyler is cautious about interacting with them, always washing his hands thoroughly afterward.

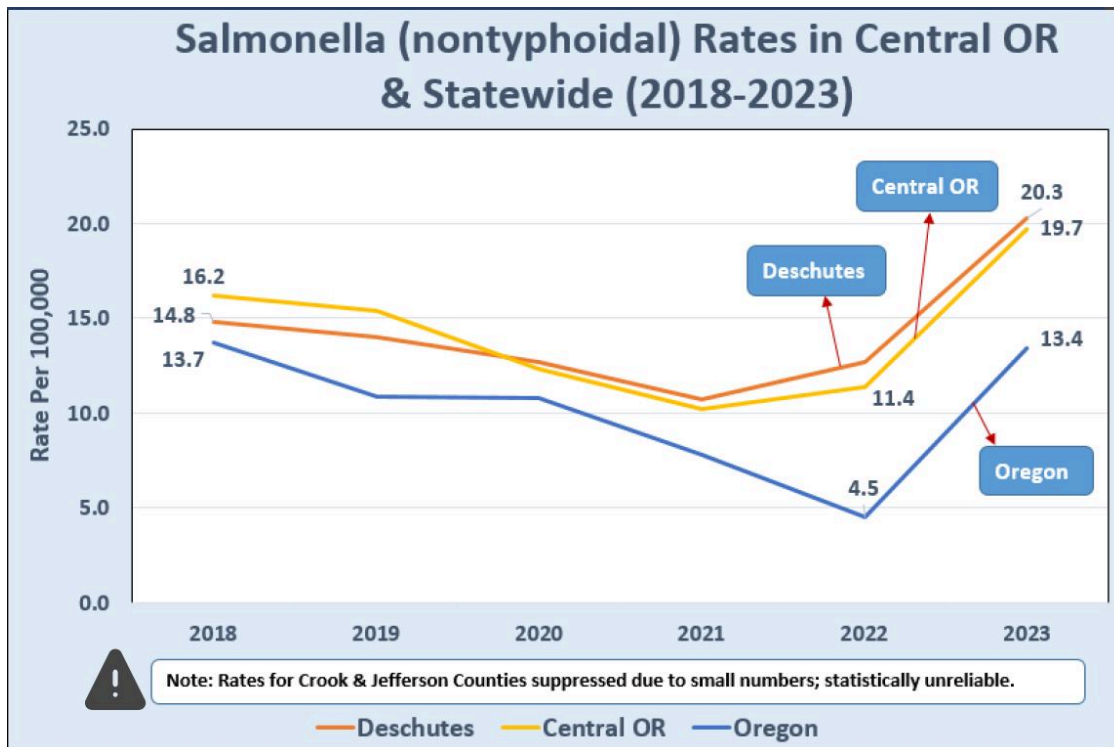
Erika, Tyler's mom, emphasizes the importance of awareness and preventative measures when it comes to backyard chickens. Handwashing and keeping the birds outside are crucial steps in preventing illness.

Here are some quick tips to keep you and your family safe:

- **Wash Your Hands:** Thoroughly with running water and soap after touching chicks and other animals, or their food, water, poop, belongings (such as toys and bowls), or habitats (such as beds, cages, tanks, coops, stalls, and barns).

- **Watch the Kids:** Keep an eye on the little ones. They love cuddling chicks, but they also love putting their hands in their mouths. Not a good combination!
- **No Kisses:** As tempting as it is, save those smooches for something safer. Chickens and ducks carry bacteria that you don't want anywhere near your face.
- **Spread the Word:** Make sure everyone knows the deal with Salmonella and how to handle poultry safely. Share the info and keep everyone in the loop.

Our local data from the [Central Oregon Quarterly Report of 2023](#) shows that Salmonella cases are a concern in central Oregon and local instances are higher than Oregon as a whole. Cases generally peak in the summer months due to the fact that the Salmonella bacteria can grow more quickly at warm temperatures, as well as more community gatherings. Be aware of undercooked foods and foods that may be left out at potlucks and BBQs.



Let's make this Easter and coming Summer a happy and healthy one! By taking simple precautions, we can ensure that our celebrations are safe for everyone involved.



Although once nearly eliminated, we have seen a resurgence of syphilis and congenital syphilis (syphilis in a baby) in Central Oregon, across the state and across the U.S. In the past 5 years, Central Oregon syphilis cases increased by 473%, from 15 regional cases in 2019 to 86 regional cases in 2023.

Many people with syphilis do not have symptoms, or the symptoms are mild and can mimic other infections or conditions. The only way to know for sure is to get tested. Untreated syphilis can cause harm to the body and to an unborn child.

STI Awareness Week provides an opportunity to raise awareness about sexually transmitted infections, or STIs, and how they impact our lives. Awareness helps reduce STI-related stigma, fear, and discrimination and reinforces that STIs are preventable, treatable, and most are curable. Public Health asks individuals and healthcare providers to take three simple actions – **TALK. TEST. TREAT.**

### **TALK:**

Open and honest conversations with your partner(s) and health provider are essential in protecting yourself from STIs and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) – which are STIs with symptoms. Decrease your risk for contracting or spreading an STI by having a conversation with your partner *before sexual contact*.

You can make sex safer by:

- Discussing the last time you were tested
- Suggesting getting tested together
- Telling your partner if you have an STI
- Agreeing to only have sex with each other
- Using latex or polyurethane condoms **correctly** for every sex act (vaginal, anal and oral)

Don't be afraid to [talk with your health care provider](#) about your sex life. The more open you are, the better your provider can help protect your health with testing and vaccines.

### **TEST:**



Get tested for STIs for your safety and the safety of your partner/s. Testing is the only way you know if you have an STI. Many STIs don't have symptoms or may have symptoms that can look like something else. You can learn more about STIs from the [CDC](#). Testing is usually quick and always confidential.

New Oregon Health Authority Screening recommendations:

- At least once for sexually active individuals under 45, if not tested since January 2021, and at least every 12 months if indicated for more intensive screening.
- At the time of each chlamydia/gonorrhea test and each HIV test.
- Three screenings recommended for all pregnant people.

### TREAT:

STIs are preventable and treatable, and most are curable. [Knowing your STI status is a critical step to stopping STI transmission](#). It is important to get treated right away if you test positive for any STI to stay healthy and to avoid passing it on to others. If you know you are infected, both of you and your partner/s need to receive treatment at the same time to avoid getting re-infected.

*Three screenings recommended for all pregnant people.*

**TALK** to your provider about testing for syphilis!!



You can lower your risk of getting an STI by using three simple steps - **TALK. TEST. TREAT.**

**Questions? Call....**

**Deschutes County: 541-322-7155**

**Crook County: 541-447-5165**

**Jefferson County: 541-475-4456**

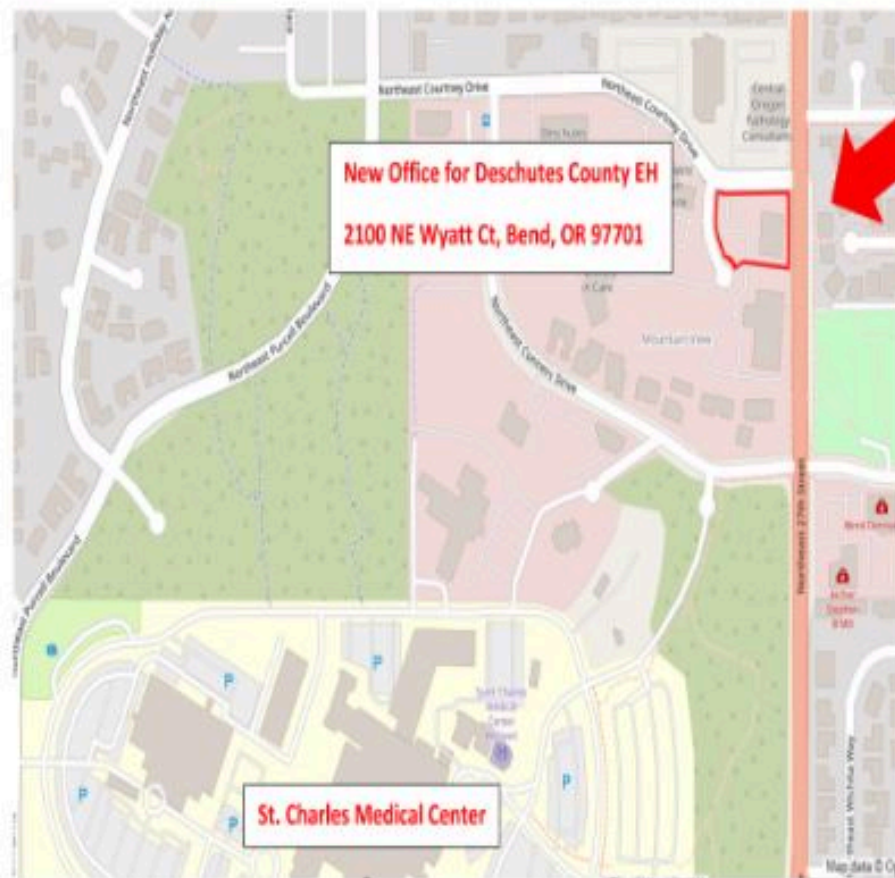
## Deschutes County EH is moving!

As of Thursday, April 11, 2024, Deschutes County Environmental Health will be located in a new office building at:

**2100 NE Wyatt Ct, Bend, OR 97701**

Here's what you need to know:

- Friday, April 5, 2024 will be the last day that Deschutes County Environmental Health will be located at 1550 NE Williamson Blvd in Bend.
- From Monday, April 8 through Wednesday, April 10, 2024, Deschutes County Environmental Health will be available by phone and email only. Please call 541-317-3114 or email our administrative staff at [maria.benitez@deschutes.org](mailto:maria.benitez@deschutes.org) or [lisa.michael@deschutes.org](mailto:lisa.michael@deschutes.org)
- Our new office, located at 2100 NE Wyatt Ct in Bend, OR 97701, will be open for business Thursday, April 11, 2024.



## Public Health Resources:

- Central Oregon public health web resources:
  - [Crook County](#)
  - [Deschutes County](#)
  - [Jefferson County](#)

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