

cases — such as which community the person is from, what places they had visited before testing positive, and whether multiple cases were from the same household, Eekhof said they do not provide information broken down by lower-tier municipality or community.

“This is done because the health unit has the legal responsibility to protect personal health information it has collected under various pieces of legislation, such as the Health Protection and Promotion Act,” he added. “Although it may seem that our geographic area has a large enough population to make it impossible to identify an individual, we essentially cover three counties comprised of small towns and it could be very easy to identify someone who tests positive.”

But he pointed out that the health unit does include the number of high-risk contacts, the number of probable cases, the number of people who have been hospitalized, the number of cases that have been resolved and the number of deaths.

“We also provide a detailed epidemiological report that includes information on the gender of our cases, and the age range,” he said. “A test result is a snapshot in time. If a person tests positive, that tells us that they had contact with an infected person within two weeks prior to their symptoms appearing and may have been spreading virus to others up to 48 hours before their symptoms appear.”

Eekhof said the health unit has “learned over time that some people can have COVID-19 and not have any symptoms, or any of the typical symptoms.

“This means that people could encounter an asymptomatic person at any time or in any place,” he added. “Knowing where a positive case lives will not protect someone from getting ill. We need people to recognize that COVID-19 is in the community and they are at risk of getting the virus wherever they live.”

It’s important to follow all of the public health precautions to protect themselves, others and to stop the spread, he said.