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## **Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update**

### **State order allows contact sports to resume with risk reduction measures**

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) updated its [current epidemic order](#) to allow contact sports to resume Monday, Feb. 8, provided masks are worn during practices and competition. If masks cannot be worn, participants must be regularly tested for COVID-19 consistent with guidelines issued by MDHHS. Safety protocols like wearing masks and testing will help keep kids, coaches and families safe and allow schools to remain open for in-person instruction. The order remains in effect through Monday, March 29.

“We continue to make progress in reducing cases and hospitalizations, helping protect our families and frontline workers and saving lives. Now, starting February 8, contact sports can resume with safety measures in place,” said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. “Michigan continues to be a national leader in fighting this virus, and we must continue using a fact-based approach so we can return to a strong economy and normal day-to-day activities. One of the most important things Michiganders can do is to make a plan to get the safe and effective vaccine when it’s available to you. And as always, mask up and maintain six feet of social distancing. We all have a personal responsibility to slow the spread of the virus so we can end this pandemic together,” Whitmer said.

Lisa Peacock, Health Officer with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, understands the community is looking forward to resuming long-awaited activities such as contact sports but cautions players, coaches, and spectators to “play it safe” and follow all of the necessary restrictions.

“Even with mitigation measures in place, sports that require frequent closeness between players make it more difficult to prevent disease transmission,” Peacock said. “We urge teams to implement a testing program to protect players and their families, coaches, and the greater school community.”

MDHHS reports that guidance, training materials, and information on participation in the school testing program will be available soon on the [michigan.gov/coronavirus](http://michigan.gov/coronavirus) website for schools who wish to implement a rapid antigen testing protocol. Anyone in the community who needs a COVID test should know that COVID-19 testing is available weekly at the health department. No doctor’s order or symptoms are necessary to get tested. To locate the testing site closest to you, call the health department at 1-800-432-4121.

Today, February 5, the health department is reporting 17 new cases: Antrim (1), Charlevoix (5), Emmet (6), and Otsego (5) counties. As of 4 p.m. today, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (866), Charlevoix (1,015), Emmet (1,422), and Otsego (1,123).

*The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit [nwhealth.org](http://nwhealth.org).*

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- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (700), Charlevoix (843), Emmet (1,172) and Otsego (944).
- Confirmed COVID-19 associated deaths in the following counties: Antrim (18), Charlevoix (11), Emmet (35), and Otsego (25).

The State of Michigan is reporting 566,630 cases and 14,797 deaths.

Stay up to date on the latest information in the Health Department of Northwest Michigan jurisdiction by [liking and following our Facebook page](#) and visiting our [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#). To locate a testing facility, visit the [Michigan COVID-19 Test Finder website](#). To track the risk levels of COVID-19 pandemic indicators, visit the [MI Safe Start Map website](#). For more information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, visit the MDHHS [vaccine website](#) or the [CDC vaccine website](#).