



MEDIA CONTACT:
Laurel Johnson, PIO
O: 231-347-5628
l.johnson@nwhealth.org
www.nwhealth.org

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Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

Low flu: masks, distance, hand washing helping?

It could be because we are wearing masks, staying a safe distance away from each other, or washing our hands regularly, but seasonal influenza activity remains lower than usual for this time of year in Michigan and nationally.

According to the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet), as of the week ending February 6 in the northern Michigan region spanning from about M-72 north and including the Upper Peninsula, about 1% of those who visited a health care provider had influenza-like symptoms. Symptoms include a fever of 100 degrees or greater, a cough, and/or a sore throat. In the U.S., 1.1 percent of outpatient visits were due to influenza-like symptoms, below the typical national baseline of 2.6 percent. Nationally, one influenza-associated pediatric death has been reported thus far for the 2020-2021 flu season, and no pediatric deaths have been confirmed in Michigan for this same timeframe.

“Overall, in the state, influenza remains at a very low activity,” said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director for the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. Meyerson attributes some of the reduced activity to COVID-19 mitigation, including “fewer interactions among people and the use of distancing, masking, and better attention to hygiene. Influenza spreads easily in households as well as crowded indoor places so the limits on gathering may also reduce the spread of flu,” he said.

Influenza typically peaks in February, although it can be as early as November or as late as March and April. Despite the low activity so far, Meyerson cautions residents to remain vigilant. “We certainly could see increases in flu activity before summer and it is not too late to get vaccinated,” he said.

Getting a flu vaccine every year is the best way to reduce your risk for influenza. As of the end of January, Michigan is at 77 percent of its goal to vaccinate more than 4.3 million residents during this year’s flu season. Contact your health care provider, health department, or local pharmacy for information about obtaining your flu vaccine. For additional information about flu activity in Michigan, visit https://www.michigan.gov/documents/MIFluFocus_1_5_06_146893_7.pdf.

Today, February 17, the health department is reporting 13 new cases: Antrim (3), Charlevoix (3), Emmet (5), and Otsego (2) counties. As of 4 p.m. today, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (906), Charlevoix (1,030), Emmet (1,479), and Otsego (1,145).

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.

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- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (777), Charlevoix (899), Emmet (1,232) and Otsego (973).
- Confirmed COVID-19 associated deaths in the following counties: Antrim (19), Charlevoix (12), Emmet (36), and Otsego (25).

The State of Michigan is reporting 577,203 cases and 15,188 deaths. As of February 12, cumulative recovered cases statewide are 517,991.

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](#).