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Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

Safety measures stressed as school age COVID-19 cases increase

Over the past few weeks, several COVID-19 outbreaks have been reported to the Health Department of Northwest Michigan in the school population, largely due to sporting events and gatherings outside of school.

“We need the cooperation of students, parents, coaches, and school staff to ensure that anyone who has COVID-19 is able to be promptly tested and isolated if positive as well as close contacts identified and quarantined,” said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer. “This entire process is imperative in protecting those who remain unvaccinated in our communities – including nearly half of people over 65 and many people with underlying conditions who are at risk for severe disease,” Peacock said.

Isolation is for people who are COVID-19 positive. It separates people who are infected with the virus from people who are not infected. It usually lasts 10 days. Quarantine is for people who are well but are exposed to someone who might have been infected. It keeps someone who might have been infected with the virus away from others. It lasts 14 days since the last possible exposure. While the standard 14-day quarantine period remains best practice, quarantine can be reduced to 10 days (except in the case of employment) if the following two conditions exist:

- The individual does not develop any symptoms or clinical evidence of COVID-19 infection during daily symptom monitoring for the 10 days after the last exposure; and
- Daily symptom monitoring continues through day 14 after the last exposure.

For explanations of several scenarios with illustrations of how to calculate the days, see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance on [when to quarantine](#). If you develop symptoms, call the health department at 800-432-4121 or use the [Michigan COVID-19 Test Finder website](#) to schedule a test.

“Deaths and complicated illness have occurred in young people in our area,” Peacock said, adding, “It is impossible to predict who might be affected next. Unfortunately, the process of case investigation and contact tracing is entirely dependent on the information shared with us by those we interview. Please know this process is focused on protecting those involved and the community from further spread and associated restrictions and we are depending on full cooperation.”

In the last 14 days, from February 26-March 12, the health department reported 277 cases of COVID-19. Information related to these cases includes:

- 30.4% of the cases were 13-19 years old.
- 93.2% of all cases were symptomatic.
- 24.5% of all cases reported unknown sources of infection.

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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Although progress has been made in reduction of hospitalizations, everyone should continue to do important things like wearing a mask, washing hands, avoiding large gatherings and getting one of the three safe and effective vaccines when it becomes available to you, Peacock said.

Today, March 12, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is reporting 25 new cases: Antrim (2), Charlevoix (3), Emmet (4), and Otsego (16) counties. As of 4 p.m. today, the health department is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (1,003), Charlevoix (1,082), Emmet (1,575), and Otsego (1,288).
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (873), Charlevoix (976), Emmet (1,355), and Otsego (1,018).
- Confirmed COVID-19 associated deaths in the following counties: Antrim (20), Charlevoix (13), Emmet (38), and Otsego (27).

The State of Michigan is reporting 605,778 cases and 15,736 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](#).

CUTLINE:

These four graphics illustrate quarantine and isolation practices for school-aged students and educators.