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Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

Health Department starting to vaccinate adolescents 12 and older starting today

Youth as young as 12 can get the Pfizer vaccine starting today and 14-year-old Tommy Skinner and 15-year-old Gabrielle Landon, accompanied by their moms, were among the first adolescents to get their shots at a Health Department of Northwest Michigan clinic.

On May 12, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) unanimously recommended the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for adolescents 12-15 years of age. The health department welcomes adolescents 12-17, accompanied by a parent/guardian, to any clinic offering the Pfizer vaccine. The health department is offering walk-in vaccinations at all their clinics or people can make an appointment. Residents can choose the date and location, and at certain clinics which of the three safe and effective vaccines they want to receive. Information on clinic locations and to make an appointment is available at www.nwhealth.org.

“The vaccine is safe and highly effective and provides our children excellent protection against COVID disease,” said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director with the health department. “The results of the clinical trials show that our younger adolescents, 12-15, had very similar responses in fighting off COVID-19 compared to older adolescents and adults. Side effects such as soreness at the injection site and low-grade fevers were the most common side effects and were generally mild and well tolerated,” said Dr. Meyerson, a board-certified pediatrician since 1995 who has cared for infants and children for over 25 years.

In April, about 25% of the more than 1,800 reported cases in the health department’s four county jurisdiction were in 0-19 year olds, with the majority being related to school age children. “Although, thankfully, most children who become sick with COVID have mild symptoms, many have reported illness for several days and unfortunately some have required hospital care,” Dr. Meyerson said. “In addition, we know that adolescents, even with no or mild symptoms, are contagious and spread can occur to those around them both socially and in their households.

“I recommend every parent consider getting their children 12 and older fully protected,” Dr. Meyerson stated. “It will greatly reduce their risk of getting sick from COVID and will keep them from having to miss many days of school, sports, and summer activities due to the need to isolate and quarantine.”

Dr. Meyerson recommends parents talk to their child’s doctor or look for helpful information to answer any questions they may have by visiting reputable websites such as the [health department](#), their local hospital, or other trusted sources such as immunize.org.

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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Gabrielle's parents, Matt and April Landon, choose to have both their children vaccinated against COVID. "We never once have questioned our children not getting this (vaccine)," April said. "This is only going to help them and all the others around them. We are hopeful other teenagers and younger children start getting the shot so school next year can be safer and back to normal," she added.

Tommy's parents, Tom and Tracy Skinner, had two words to say when asked why they favored getting their son vaccinated: "Vaccines work!"

"I definitely want to protect my child from getting COVID and we are excited about the future of life getting back to feeling more normal and having more peace of mind when gathering with vaccinated friends and family," Tracy said. "By getting vaccinated today, he is on track to being fully vaccinated the week after school is out for the summer!"

Upcoming clinics for walk-ins or to make a reservation by clicking on the link provided include:

Friday, May 14

- Emmet County Fairgrounds, 1129 Charlevoix Ave., Petoskey, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor). Walk-in or to schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)
- Family Fare, 240 S. Lake St., East Jordan, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor) or **J&J** (must be 18 and older). Walk-in or to schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)
- Boyne City Mushroom Festival, 2:30-5 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor) or **J&J** (must be 18 and older). Walk-ins only.

Saturday, May 15

- Elk Rapids High School, 308 Meguzee Pt., Elk Rapids, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor) or **J&J** (must be 18 and older). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

Tuesday, May 18

- Helena Township Hall, 8751 Helena Rd., Alden, 1-4 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)
- Ellison Place, 150 Dale Drive, Gaylord, 9:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

Wednesday, May 19

- Boyne City Education Center, 321 South Park Street, Boyne City (enter off of Main St.), 3-6 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

Thursday, May 20

- Emmet County Fairgrounds, 1129 Charlevoix Ave., Petoskey, 1-6:30 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

Friday, May 21

- Charlevoix Co. Shirley Roloff Northside Center (Old Elem. School), 13513 Division St., Charlevoix, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Vaccine: **Pfizer** (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor). To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

The calendar on the website www.nwhealth.org lists clinics currently scheduled through May.

Today, May 13, 17 new cases were reported: Antrim (3), Charlevoix (5), Emmet (6), and Otsego (3) counties. As of 4 p.m. today, the health department is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (1,593), Charlevoix (1,626), Emmet (2,331), and Otsego (2,293).
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (1,387), Charlevoix (1,390), Emmet (1,932), and Otsego (1,900).
- Confirmed COVID-19 associated deaths in the following counties: Antrim (27), Charlevoix (19), Emmet (40), and Otsego (38).

The State of Michigan reported 871,569 cases and 18,467 deaths.

CUTLINE:

Tommy Skinner, 14, accompanied by his mother Tracy Skinner, received his Pfizer vaccination today by Vanessa Mushlock, RN at a Health Department of Northwest Michigan clinic at the Emmet County Fairgrounds. Following approval of the Pfizer vaccine for 12-15 year olds, the health department is now vaccinating adolescents 12 and older. Minors must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Gabrielle Landon, 15, prepares for her COVID-19 Pfizer vaccination today from Vanessa Mushlock, RN with the health department, while mom April Landon (standing) looks on. Today was the first day youth 12-15 could get vaccinated at a Health Department of Northwest Michigan clinic.



