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Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

Please note that this Update contains the most current information as of its release. Please visit <https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus> for further updates later today or over the weekend.

State, CDC announces fully vaccinated people do not need to wear masks in most locations

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is updating the Gatherings and Mask Order to align with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's latest guidance on face coverings. The new order goes into effect at 9 a.m., Saturday, May 15.

The CDC announced Thursday that people who are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus can stop wearing masks, both outdoors and indoors, except on public transportation and in crowded indoor venues.

The new guidelines come as cases are dropping and as the Health Department of Northwest Michigan and others across the state and U.S. are vaccinating children ages 12 and up. The new guidelines are intended, at least in part, to encourage people to get the vaccine. The CDC guidelines do not override federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial laws, or regulations put in place by businesses and workplaces.

"Many people welcome these guidelines which represent another step toward normalcy. We can enjoy these new freedoms thanks in large part to the rising level of vaccination coverage across our state! We need to continue this amazing progress to continue toward emerging from the pandemic," said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer.

According to the CDC, this guidance is based on the available science, and over the past few weeks, cases have continued falling dramatically, and a growing number of studies have shown three big things: 1. The vaccines are working in the real world. Studies show them to be more than 90% effective in the real-world settings in preventing mild and severe disease, hospitalization, and death; 2. The vaccines have proven to be effective against the COVID-19 variants currently circulating in the country; and 3. If you're vaccinated, you're less likely to spread the virus. A growing body of evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people are less likely to have asymptomatic infection and to be able to transmit COVID-19 to others.

"Taken together, this science is encouraging and shows that vaccinated people are protected and less likely to carry the virus to others. So, with all this evidence in mind, we are recommending that vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask," the CDC stated.

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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If you travel, you will still be required to wear a mask on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States, and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations. The CDC will continue to update guidance and policies as the science emerges and more people are vaccinated.

The CDC and health department recognizes that the challenge is you may not know if someone around you is vaccinated or not. “This is why we are encouraging everyone to get vaccinated – because we know the benefits: it protects you, it protects others, and it lets us begin to return to normal. So, we hope everyone takes advantage of this important tool to stay safe and end the pandemic. Vaccination is safe, available, and free,” Peacock said.

Another key to this new CDC guidance is one needs to be fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated means 2 weeks after your second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine. If you don’t meet these requirements, regardless of your age, you are NOT fully vaccinated. Keep taking all precautions until you are fully vaccinated.

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

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 14, 29 new cases were reported: Antrim (5), Charlevoix (4), Emmet (7), and Otsego (13) counties. As of 4 p.m. today, the health department is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (1,598), Charlevoix (1,630), Emmet (2,338), and Otsego (2,306).
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (1,399), Charlevoix (1,403), Emmet (1,958), and Otsego (1,912).
- Confirmed COVID-19 associated deaths in the following counties: Antrim (27), Charlevoix (19), Emmet (40), and Otsego (38).

The State of Michigan reported 873,335 cases and 18,500 deaths.