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

**Health Department continues to encourage masks as source control  
with cases increasing and new variants emerging**

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan to date has not yet been notified of the presence of Omicron in its four-county jurisdiction of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties.

Although not yet detected in the jurisdiction, Omicron is known to be more transmissible than previous variants. To identify a specific variant a very small percentage of positive COVID-19 tests are randomly selected for sequencing, which takes time to process. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has indicated that rapidly increasing numbers of Omicron cases being identified in other areas of the state and the current pattern of transmission likely indicate that it is present even where it hasn't been identified yet. With a recent uptick in COVID-19 cases in the jurisdiction the health department is providing area residents with resources and guidance should they learn of exposure or test positive.

Lisa Peacock, Health Officer for the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, is reiterating to residents that, "regardless of variant, if COVID positive or exposed, the protective measures are the same – correct and consistent masking, getting tested, and staying home when symptomatic or while waiting for test results."

The [new guidance document](#) was created to support area residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 or been exposed to a confirmed case to understand quarantine and isolation timelines. It is becoming more evident that a person with COVID-19 is most contagious in the 2 days prior and 3 days following symptom onset therefore it is imperative that everyone understand the steps they need to take to keep themselves and those around them safe. While CDC and MDHHS guidelines for isolation and quarantine have changed, masking recommendations from health officials remain the same – correct and consistent masking in public settings regardless of vaccination status.

"It is important to recognize universal masking in public settings as a method of source control. When masks are worn correctly the risk of spreading COVID-19 to others is reduced. We continue to see an increased risk of spread from asymptomatic, pre-symptomatic cases and those with mild early symptoms onset which supports our recommendations for continued protective measures when in public settings," Peacock added.

For a list of vaccine providers and locations in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties, click [here](#). To schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan exclusively for children 5 to 11 years old, [click here](#). To schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment with the health department for anyone 12 and older, [click here](#). A parent/guardian must accompany those younger than 18 to a COVID-19 clinic. Please bring an insurance card to the

*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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appointment. Anyone with questions or unable to find a time or date that works for them and/or their child may call the health department at 800-432-4121.

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](#).