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Health Department of Northwest Michigan

COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Ending

Change in national status comes with updated guidelines for vaccinations

Based on current COVID-19 trends, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is ending the public health emergency declared for COVID-19. The declaration [officially expires](#) at the end of the day Thursday, May 11.

According to HHS, since the peak of the Omicron surge at the end of January 2022:

- Daily COVID-19 reported cases are down 92%,
- COVID-19 deaths have declined by over 80%, and
- New COVID-19 hospitalizations are down nearly 80%.

“Access to COVID-19 vaccinations and antiviral treatments such as Paxlovid will generally not be affected by the ending of the public health emergency,” says Dr. Joshua Meyerson, Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW) Medical Director. “With better immunity from vaccinations and previous infection and the availability of effective medications for those at increased risk for severe disease, we are in a much better place than we were three years ago.”

Do You Need a Booster?

Regardless of past vaccination status with the monovalent/original mRNA vaccine, everyone who hasn't yet can receive a single Omicron booster, which is also called the Bivalent vaccine. This can provide additional protection against circulating strains.

The newer Bivalent booster rolled out last fall and contains components from the original virus strain as well as the BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron variants. It is now the standard for COVID-19 boosters and can be given as a primary first dose too.

Here are the current simplified guidelines:

- Everyone 6 years of age and older should get one Bivalent Covid-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) to be considered [up to date](#).
- [People aged 65 years and older](#) may get a second updated booster (at least 4 months after they had their first).
- For those under 65, only people who are [moderately or severely immunocompromised](#) may also get a second Bivalent booster dose (2 months after their first dose). Those with other underlying medical conditions only need a single Bivalent dose to be up to date.
- Children 6 months through 5 years of age may receive one or more doses of the updated vaccine depending on the number of doses they previously received.

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.

“For many of us, it has been a significant period of time since a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine,” Meyerson says. “The availability of the Bivalent vaccine offers an excellent opportunity to reduce our risk of infection, illness, and transmission of the virus to those around us.”

To schedule a booster, call our local staff at (800) 432-4121.

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