

For Immediate Release

Contact: Susan Ringler Cerniglia, MPH
Public Information Officer
Washtenaw County Health Department
ringlers@washtenaw.org
Cell 734-678-7010

Washtenaw County Health Department COVID-19 Advisory
Take COVID-19 precautions

YPSILANTI, Mich., Jan. 14, 2022 – In Washtenaw County, as elsewhere, new COVID-19 cases have increased dramatically in recent weeks. Hospitalizations and deaths have remained high since late fall. Washtenaw County Health Department urges all community members and organizations to take precautions. Use available, effective strategies to reduce spread and prevent severe illness.

“We are entering the third year of the pandemic,” says Jimena Loveluck, MSW, health officer with Washtenaw County Health Department. “We are in a very different place. We have effective tools we did not have at the beginning, primarily vaccination.”

“Our public health workforce continues working incredibly hard, but we’ve been overwhelmed for a long time now. We are doing the best we can with the resources we have. We cannot do more, and we cannot do everything. I want to be very clear that we remain focused on vaccination, and we continue to support testing as much as possible as well as ongoing information sharing – all with attention to equitable access,” continues Loveluck.

“I know many of you are already doing everything you can – and are also hurting from loss, illness or very real pandemic fatigue,” says Loveluck. “I’m asking everyone to get vaccinated or boosted if you’re eligible and have not yet done so. Then take the additional steps we recommend to reduce spread and protect those who cannot get vaccinated or remain vulnerable.”

Omicron is more easily transmitted and likely circulating locally. **Everyone should use the effective strategies available to them to prevent and reduce the spread of illness:**

- Wear a well-fitting face mask in indoor public spaces (A multilayer, surgical, KN95, or N95 mask is recommended rather than a cloth mask. A cloth mask is better than no mask.)
- Get vaccinated or boosted [when eligible](https://vaccinefinder.org) (<https://vaccinefinder.org>)
- [Seek testing](#) if feeling ill, or if you have been exposed (if you have been exposed but don’t have symptoms, wait 5 days before testing)
- Stay away from others if you are feeling ill, waiting for test results, or have tested positive (www.washtenaw.org/covid19whattodo)
- Avoid crowded areas or events.
- [Limit gatherings](#). If seeing others, increase ventilation (meet outside, open windows, increase air flow), limit the number of people, encourage everyone to be up to date on vaccinations, keep at least 6 feet apart, and wear a well-fitting mask (especially if indoors).
- Clean hands frequently

Washtenaw County Health Department
555 Towner Street • Ypsilanti, MI 48198
Phone: 734-544-6700 • Fax: 734-544-6705
washtenaw.org/health



Environmental Health Division
705 N Zeeb Road • Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: 734-222-3800 • Fax: 734-222-3930
washtenaw.org/envhealth

Health Department recommendations are supported by scientific data and should be taken seriously during a pandemic without the need for additional state or local orders. Currently, the Health Department cannot divert resources to implement or enforce broad orders.

COVID-19 in Washtenaw County: Questions & Answers

Washtenaw County Health Department is hosting two question and answer sessions next week, one in English and one in Spanish. Health officer Jimena Loveluck and medical director Juan Luis Marquez, MD, MPH, will provide information on COVID-19 in Washtenaw County and answer questions. These events will be streamed live on [Facebook](#) @wcpublichealth and recorded: Tuesday, Jan 18 at 7pm in English and Thursday, Jan 20 at 7pm in Spanish. Submit your questions beforehand using this link: <https://bit.ly/wchdfbjan>.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Anyone eligible but not yet vaccinated or boosted against COVID should do so as soon as possible. Vaccination is safe, effective, free, and available at [multiple community locations](#). COVID-19 vaccines are preventing people from getting seriously ill, hospitalized, and dying. Everyone 5 years old and older can get vaccinated to protect themselves from the most serious impacts of COVID. Additionally, more and more people are eligible for boosters. Everyone 12 and up should get their booster as soon as they're eligible!

In [Washtenaw County](#), nearly 70% of all residents 5 and up are fully vaccinated. Almost 66% of people 65+ have gotten their booster. We are leading the state with our vaccination rate for kids: over 50% of children 5-11 have gotten at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine in Washtenaw.

Appointments for vaccinations are available at the Health Department. If assistance is needed, people can call us to make an appointment (734-544-6700) or email for help (health@washtenaw.org).

COVID-19 Testing

We continue to experience limited testing capacity and supplies, a situation that is not unique to Washtenaw County. The Health Department is working to facilitate greater access to testing by using multiple strategies, including maintaining website information, supporting callers looking for testing, and offering testing events when possible.

Supplies of at-home test kits are extremely limited. The Health Department currently has a small number and is distributing them in high-need areas where exposed individuals may not be able to access public testing sites. Distribution can be expanded as additional kits are secured. See www.washtenaw.org/covid19test for testing options and search tools.

If you are tested by a health care provider or at an urgent care or testing site, the test provider is [required](#) to report your results to the local health department.

Washtenaw County Health Department is not collecting home test results from individuals at this time. If you are using a home rapid antigen test, remember that a positive at-home test is considered a positive and does not need to be confirmed with a PCR or additional test. Local testing resources are stretched thin, and transmission is high - if you have already tested positive, we do not recommend testing again before at least 5 days have passed and any symptoms improved or resolved. In some situations, you may need a record of an official PCR test, such as for future travel or medical/insurance records, but it is not necessary for confirmation of infection.

Local COVID information and updates are always available at www.washtenaw.org/covid19. The Health Department also provides frequent social media updates (@wcpublichealth) and sends regular email updates, sign up at <http://bit.ly/WCHD555>.

Washtenaw County Health Department

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community, including responding to health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs. Visit us at washtenaw.org/health or call 734-544-6700.

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