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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December 6, 2021
Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

Health Department: Reminders for safe and healthy workplace

The health department is reminding residents, local business owners and employees, and visitors to take responsibility and slow the spread of COVID-19 after notification of Omicron variant detected in the U.S. and the holidays approaching.

Residents, businesses owners and their employees can take the following steps to ensure a healthy community and workforce throughout the holiday season:

- **Stay home and get tested if you are sick.** If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, or have flu-like symptoms, it is important to stay home to prevent spreading any illness to those around you.
  - Testing locations throughout the four-county jurisdiction of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego can be found here [COVID-19 Testing List](https://www.nwhealth.org/covid19main.html).
  - Community testing events in partnership with Honu Management Group are available on Mondays in Gaylord, Thursdays in Central Lake (starting Dec. 16), and Saturdays in Charlevoix. More details can be found by visiting: [www.nwhealth.org/covid19main.html](https://www.nwhealth.org/covid19main.html)

- **Notify close contacts of exposure if positive for COVID-19.** The health department is being notified of a large volume of positive tests each day and we may not be able to speak with each person in a timely way. If you test positive, please fill out the electronic survey we send by text or email, isolate yourself at home for 10 days and notify your close contacts. Slowing the spread of the virus can be achieved if close contacts are informed of their exposure, understand the need to quarantine for 10 days, monitor for symptoms and get tested. See [If you test positive for COVID-19](https://www.nwhealth.org/covid19main.html) for additional steps to help stop the spread because with the increase in COVID-19 cases in our area, you may not hear from the health department right away.

- **Take preventative measures.** Physically distance from others when possible, avoid crowds or seek testing after gatherings or travel, wash hands frequently with soap and water and clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub, and wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose while indoors around others not from your household.

Dr. Meyerson stressed that the Delta variant is still the most dominant strain of COVID-19 spreading, although the Omicron variant has been detected in numerous states so far. Both variants are cause for concern, Dr. Meyerson said, and the best way to protect yourself, your family and your loved ones is to get vaccinated – and that includes getting your booster shot, too.

“Getting your booster shot is just as important as getting your first or second COVID vaccination,” said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director for the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. “Anyone 18 and
older who received their last shot six months after completing their primary vaccination series (for Pfizer or Moderna) or two months after receiving their J&J vaccination, is eligible for a booster vaccination,” he said.

Vaccinations – including booster shots – are widely available at pharmacies, health care providers and health department clinics. For a list of vaccine providers and locations in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties, click here. To schedule an appointment with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan exclusively for children 5 to 11 years old, click here. To schedule an appointment with the health department for anyone 12 and older, click here. A parent/guardian must accompany anyone younger than 18 to a COVID-19 clinic. Please bring an insurance card to the 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.

To find a test site in the area, visit http://www.nwhealth.org/covid19main.html.

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.

CALLOUTS:

**IF YOU RECEIVED Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna**

*Who should get a booster:*
Everyone 18 years or older

*When to get a booster:*
At least 6 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series.

*Which booster should you get?*
Any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States.

**IF YOU RECEIVED Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen**

*Who should get a booster:*
Everyone 18 years or older

*When to get a booster:*
At least 2 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination.

*Which booster should you get?*
Any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States.