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January 10, 2022

Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

**Booster shots timeline shortened
*Omicron variant detected in Antrim, Charlevoix counties***

The FDA recently shortened the time between the completion of a primary series of the Moderna vaccines for anyone 18 and older and the Pfizer vaccine for anyone 12 and older can receive their booster shot to five months. The move comes as the country is in the middle of a surge of the highly contagious Omicron variant, which spreads more rapidly than the original SARS-CoV02 virus and other variants that have emerged.

Today, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) notified the Health Department of Northwest Michigan that the Omicron variant of COVID-19 has been identified in one Antrim County and one Charlevoix County resident. Both residents were tested on December 28, 2021. Determining which variant is present in an individual's test sample requires genetic sequencing, which is only conducted on a percentage of positive tests and can often take a few weeks. Health Department officials anticipate there are many more cases of Omicron present in our jurisdiction.

"Vaccination is the best defense against COVID-19 and its variants so shortening the length of time between completion of the primary series and the booster dose for both Pfizer and Moderna is very helpful in our quest to say safe and healthy," said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director for the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. "I encourage everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated and also get their booster shot, which is very important to receive due to the omicron variant," Dr. Meyerson added.

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration created a graphic, ["Do I qualify for a COVID-19 vaccine booster and which one?"](#) to illustrate booster eligibility.

Omicron is known to be more transmissible than previous variants. To protect yourself, get vaccinated and get your booster shot, correctly and consistently wear a mask, get tested, and stay home if you have any symptoms. While symptoms related to the Omicron variant may be mild, symptoms to watch for include runny nose/congestion, fever or chills, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

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 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.

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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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](#).

CUTLINE:

This graphic from the US Food & Drug Administration depicts who qualifies for a COVID-19 vaccine booster and which one.

Do I qualify for a COVID-19 vaccine booster and which one?

Which primary vaccine series did you complete?	Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna	Janssen (J&J)
<p style="margin: 0;">You can get a booster if:</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">It's been at least 5 months since completing a primary series AND you are:</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">It's been at least 5 months since completing a primary series AND you are:</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">It's been at least 2 months since completing primary vaccination AND you are:</p>
<p style="margin: 0;">If eligible, you can get a booster of:</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">Age 12+</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">Age 18+</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">Age 18+</p>
<p style="margin: 0;">If eligible, you can get a booster of:</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">Pfizer-BioNTech* Moderna Janssen (J&J)</p> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">*Only Pfizer-BioNTech can be used as a booster in those age 12-17.</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">Moderna Pfizer-BioNTech Janssen (J&J)</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">Janssen (J&J) Pfizer-BioNTech Moderna</p>

For more information, visit www.fda.gov/covid19vaccines.