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**February 15, 2022**

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

### **Wearing respirator-type mask indoors provides greatest protection against COVID-19**

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan reminds families that masks and respirators are effective at reducing transmission of COVID-19 when worn consistently and correctly.

Although the [First Amended Order](#) which requires masks to be worn in school settings will be lifted at 11:59 p.m., Thursday, February 17, 2022, health officials still advise individuals to wear a mask in public indoor spaces while community transmission levels remain high. The change in the school mask mandate was announced February 11 and was based on rapidly decreasing COVID-19 cases in the region, less pressure on healthcare facilities and services, and the availability of the vaccine for anyone 5 years of age or older.

Health officials stress that vaccination, masking, testing and therapeutics continue to be critical tools in our fight against the impact of COVID-19.

“Properly and consistently wearing a mask in public indoor locations protects those around you and the individual wearing the mask,” said Dr. Joshua Meyerson, health department medical director. “And, wearing a N95 or KN95 mask is more effective at filtering the viral containing particles and reducing one’s risk of contracting COVID-19,” Dr. Meyerson added.

[A recent study](#) published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report found that consistent use of a face mask or respirator in indoor public settings reduces the odds of testing positive for COVID-19. For example, wearing a cloth mask reduces one’s risk 56% over wearing no mask. [A graphic visualization](#) shows wearing a surgical mask reduces that risk by 66% and wearing a respirator-type mask (N95/KN95) reduces one’s risk by 83%.

“Wearing a respirator-type mask with higher filtration capacity is associated with the most protection against the virus,” Dr. Meyerson explained. The health department recently distributed KN95 masks from their office locations (check your local location for availability) and the masks are readily available at local stores. More information about masks and respirators, including free N95 mask manufacturers, can be found at the [CDC website](#).

For your best protection, health department staff recommend staying up to date on your COVID-19 vaccine and upgrading your mask to a high filtration respirator like a KN95. Wearing masks in addition to vaccination are our best tools against COVID-19. If eligible, individuals can schedule their vaccination or booster dose by [clicking here](#). To schedule a COVID-19 test with the health department, [click here](#). Due

*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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to low demand for testing, the health department is discontinuing testing at the Shirley Roloff Center in Charlevoix on Saturdays.

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:**

As shown in this graphic, people who reported always wearing a mask in indoor public settings were less likely to test positive for COVID-19 than people who didn't.



## COVID-19 CASE DATA

FEBRUARY 9 - FEBRUARY 15, 2022

	Total New Cases	Avg. Daily Cases	New Deaths
Antrim	54	7.7	1
Charlevoix	45	6.4	1
Emmet	54	7.7	3
Otsego	78	11.1	2

HEALTH DEPARTMENT of Northwest Michigan  
 Public Health Information Line: 1-800-386-5959  
 More COVID data: [www.nwhealth.org/covid19](http://www.nwhealth.org/covid19)  
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