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Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

BA.2 variant takes hold in US

Despite low hospitalizations, deaths, safety measures recommended

The Omicron BA.2 variant is taking hold across the United States, yet public health officials are stating that warming weather and built-in immunity may lessen its impact on the general population.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Omicron BA.2 variant accounted for 72.2% of the cases in the United States as of April 2. Although case trends are rising slightly, hospitalizations and deaths are trending downward, [according to data on the CDC website](#). The BA.2 appears to spread more easily than the Omicron variant detected earlier, though the severity of cases is less – potentially due to a high level of immunity in the population from vaccines, boosters, and previous infections.

“Although hospitalizations and deaths are not as severe with this variant at this time, residents are urged to take mitigation measures based on their personal choice and risk factors,” said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan.

The CDC has a [COVID-19 Community Level tool](#) to help communities decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest data. Levels can be low, medium, or high and are determined by looking at hospital beds being used, hospital admissions, and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area.

As of Monday, the community level in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties was “low,” according to the CDC data. The low level still means residents should stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and get tested if they have symptoms.

Being vaccinated and receiving at least one booster shot (if eligible) is the best prevention against COVID-19, Peacock said. The health department offers [convenient COVID-19 vaccination clinics](#) across its four-county region of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties. If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or have any symptoms, the health department offers free and convenient tests. To find a testing site near you, visit <http://nwhealth.org/covid19test.html>.

In addition, people may choose to mask at any time. People with [symptoms, a positive test, or exposure](#) to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask. Those who are immunocompromised or those who live with someone with risk factors may also choose to wear a mask.

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](#).

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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COVID-19 CASE DATA

APRIL 6 - APRIL 12, 2022

	Total New Cases	Avg. Daily Cases	New Deaths
Antrim	13	1.9	0
Charlevoix	5	0.7	0
Emmet	15	2.1	0
Otsego	7	1.0	0



Public Health Information Line: 1-800-386-5959

More COVID data: www.nwhealth.org/covid19

   [nwhealthdepartment](https://www.nwhealthdepartment.org)