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Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

Preparing for indoor events

New wave of COVID-19 transmissions prompt personal safety considerations

With proms, band concerts, and graduations happening, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW) asks the public to make informed decisions as they celebrate spring, youth, and achievements. The region continues to see high transmission rates with the BA.2 variant.

“Although still much lower than during the fall and winter, our hospital admission rates have also trended up, and thus the [CDC Community Levels](#) are now ‘medium’ and ‘high’ in our counties,” said Dr. Joshua Meyerson, HDNW Medical Director. “This is a good time to remind ourselves and the community of mitigation measures that should be considered.”

CDC recommendations for areas during Medium to High Community levels are:

- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. If you have not had a first booster dose and are eligible, you can greatly reduce your risk of severe illness by getting a booster dose. A second booster dose, for those eligible, can further reduce the risk of infection.
- If you are immunocompromised or high risk for severe disease, wear a well-fitting mask or respirator (KN95 or N95) while in indoor public spaces where you could be exposed, or consider avoiding those activities.
- If you have someone in your household or have other contact with someone at high risk for severe disease, consider wearing a mask while indoors with them and/or get tested before contact.
- Have a plan for rapid testing, such as having home tests on-hand or access to testing.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you are a candidate for [treatments](#) like oral antivirals and monoclonal antibodies. Treatment, if initiated soon after infection, can reduce the risk of severe disease.
- Maintain improved ventilation throughout indoor spaces.
- Follow recommendations for isolation and quarantine – stay home if ill, wear a mask if exposed, get tested if symptoms present or after exposure.

“While transmissions are increasing rapidly, it is important to note we are not in the same situation as we were last fall with the Delta variant. The rate of hospitalizations and deaths are not rising at the pace of infections, which follows the pattern of what happened in Europe before the United States,” said Dan Thorell, HDNW Interim Health Officer.

Vaccines and Testing

HDNW continues to offer [free vaccines and tests](#) at its clinics and mobile lab. The mobile laboratory is returning to Emmet County. From 8:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Wednesday, May 18, the mobile lab offers free COVID-19 testing at the Emmet County Fairgrounds. The lab is maintaining its schedule at E-Free Church

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.

in Gaylord from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Tuesdays and the Krist Gas Station in Charlevoix from 8-12:30 p.m. Thursdays.

According to the CDC, people who are up to date on vaccines have much lower risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 compared with unvaccinated people.

To [schedule a vaccine](#), call 800-432-4121 or visit www.nwhealth.org/covid19imm.html.

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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](#).

