



Health, Human & Veterans Services

Wayne County Public Health Division Recommends Two-week Temporary Masking in Schools Post-Holiday Break

January 4, 2023. As we return from the holiday season where there has been an increase in travel and indoor gatherings as COVID-19, Flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and other respiratory viruses are spreading across the U.S., Wayne County Public Health Division (WCPHD) is recommending all individuals in K-12 school settings wear a mask during the two-week period when schools restart after the holiday break.

The return from winter break is a time of higher risk of transmission in the school-setting for not only COVID-19 but other respiratory viruses. Alongside vaccination, masks continue to be an effective tool to protect against the spread of respiratory viruses. Though Wayne County remains at “Medium” COVID-19 risk, this recommendation anticipates the high risk of respiratory viral transmission that could arise given the unique risks posed by returning to crowded indoor school settings after the gatherings of the holidays. This voluntary, temporary recommendation is about being proactive to reduce the combined impact of higher-than-normal levels of Flu and RSV and new COVID-19 variants.

In addition, WCPHD strongly urges all individuals and families to follow basic, everyday preventive actions to keep themselves and their loved ones safe:

- Everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated against COVID-19 and Flu and receive the updated COVID-19 booster as soon as possible. Flu and COVID-19 vaccinations are the single most effective protection against severe illness and death.
- Stay home when sick and avoid being around others--especially young children and those at risk of severe illness. Wear a mask when unable to separate from others.
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19, stay at home for at least 5 days and wear a mask in public or around other people for at least 10 days.
- Keep a supply of COVID-19 tests at home. Test when you have symptoms, 5 days after being exposed to someone with COVID-19, before/after travel or gatherings, or before visiting someone at higher risk.
- Contact a healthcare provider if you test positive for the Flu or COVID-19. You may be eligible for treatment options that lower your risk of being hospitalized.
- Wash hands well and often.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or upper arm.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, especially when someone is ill.

WCPHD will continue to monitor community conditions and update recommendations as risk levels change.

For more information including WCPHD vaccine and testing clinics call 866-610-3885 or visit www.waynecounty.com/covid19. For additional local vaccine options visit: www.vaccines.gov. Get free at-home tests at: www.covid.gov/tests ; www.accesscovidtests.org