



LIVINGSTON COUNTY
Health Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Livingston County COVID-19 Cases Trending Upward

HOWELL, Michigan. - (October 23, 2020) Over the last two weeks, COVID-19 cases have dramatically increased in Livingston County, a trend that is mirrored both statewide and nationally. The increase in cases is likely due to continued community transmission and small group gatherings among adults. Additionally, the local test positivity rate in Livingston County is above the state's rate this week, while the number of total tests has remained the same. Livingston County continues to be in the second highest risk level ("D"), as seen on the [MI Safe Start Dashboard](#).

In August, an increased case count was associated with young adult gatherings and parties. There is now an increase in cases among older individuals aged 50-60 years. Older individuals are at an increased risk for severe health complications associated with COVID-19 and are more likely to transmit the virus to others. The increase in continued community transmission among older individuals has the potential to have major impacts on both in-person schooling and hospital capacity.

Typically, each year we see an increase in hospitalizations due to flu, which stretches hospitals and healthcare systems to their limits. As we saw in the spring, high rates of COVID-19 placed an immense strain on the capacity of our hospital systems. Currently, we are seeing an increase in COVID-19 hospitalization rates in Livingston County that are higher than rates seen in spring. If we have a severe flu season and continue to see an increase in COVID-19 cases, it will be devastating for our healthcare system and put many lives at risk. One way to protect yourself now is to get the flu vaccine, which can reduce the severity of the flu season and decrease the burden on our hospitals and clinics.

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Reducing the impact of COVID-19 and the flu on our community is possible. As we approach the colder months, the Livingston County Health Department (LCHD) wants to bring attention to the risk involved with indoor activities and events. Gatherings, especially those with non-household members, pose a greater risk because of increased exposure to others.

If you choose to attend or host a gathering, please consider the following factors:

- Higher levels of COVID-19 cases in an area could indicate increased community spread.
- Indoor spaces tend to have poor air circulation in the winter because it is difficult to open windows and bring in fresh air.
- The duration of the gathering. Longer exposure time increases risk.
- The number of people at the gathering. Socializing with people from outside your household increases risk.
- The locations that attendees are traveling from.
- Events that revolve around sharing meals or dining space and consuming alcohol can increase risky behaviors, such as not following social distancing and forgetting to wear a mask.

Gatherings with more preventive measures in place, such as mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing pose less risk than gatherings where fewer or no preventive measures are implemented.

LCHD is asking residents to work together to reduce the risk of getting or spreading both COVID-19 and flu this season:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and immediately wash or sanitize your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

For more information and local updates, please visit www.LCHD.org or www.michigan.gov/coronavirus. For more details on data trends in Livingston County, please see the attached LCHD weekly COVID-19 snapshot.

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