

MDHHS AND DHD#10 UPDATE MASKING GUIDANCE

MDHHS Withdrawing Public Health Advisory on Masking in Indoor Public Settings, Including Schools

February 22, 2022 – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) have entered the post-surge recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic and are updating their masking guidance.

DHD#10 has been a proponent of responsible protective behaviors to reduce the spread of COVID-19. With decreasing COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations across the state, MDHSS and DHD#10 are updating their mask guidance for public settings, including school settings, to reflect the post-surge recovery phase.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is not yet over,” said DHD#10 Health Officer Kevin Hughes. “However, with the downward trends in cases, and our increased access to masks, vaccines, testing, and treatment, it is time to begin the recovery phase.”

The COVID-19 cycle can be broken down into three primary phases:

- **Response** – Local and state public health implement rapid response to a surge. The public may be advised to increase mask usage, testing, and social distancing.
- **Recovery** – Post-surge. No immediate resurgence predicted. Local and state public health will monitor conditions that could lead to future surges.
- **Readiness** – A surge in cases is expected, with implications on severity of illness and hospital capacity. Increased communication to the public regarding possible new risks.

MDHHS recommends that individuals, regardless of vaccination status, practice universal masking when in high-risk, congregate settings such as long-term care facilities, homeless shelters, corrections facilities, and healthcare facilities. It is also important that individuals wear a mask during isolation and quarantine periods to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. School districts and organizations are encouraged to continue to consider their local conditions when determining their masking policies.

At this time, universal masking is still recommended in all school settings. This will continue to be the recommendation until the amount of COVID-19 in our areas decreases further.

“We can confidently say at this point, that those who are up to date on their COVID vaccines and boosters, as well as wearing a high-quality mask, are well protected from COVID-19 infection, regardless of what others around them choose to do,” said DHD#10 Medical Director Dr. Morse. “We are now at a point where responsible behavior is up to the individual and parents to decide. Those that wish to be fully protected from COVID-19 illness and its complications are encouraged to continue to mask in public and get vaccinated or boosted.”



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KN95 masks are currently available in all 10 DHD#10 offices. Masks are given out 3 per person on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last. To find your nearest DHD#10 office, visit www.dhd10.org/clinic-locations/.

For those wanting to schedule their COVID-19 vaccine, booster dose and/or flu shot, please visit www.dhd10.org/schedule or call 888-217-3904.

For those interested in hosting a COVID-19 vaccine or testing clinic at their location, please complete this registration form: <https://bit.ly/3j52rSj>.

For those needing a COVID-19 test, DHD#10 is hosting testing clinics at various locations throughout their jurisdiction. Find a testing site near you at www.dhd10.org/covid19-testing-clinics. You do not need to be a resident to get tested at any of these clinics. COVID-19 testing also takes place at most pharmacies, urgent cares, and your primary health care provider's office. You can also find testing in neighboring counties on the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' (MDHHS) site: https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_104699_104714-554722-,00.html.

DHD#10 does not supply COVID-19 at-home tests; however, test kits are available at most pharmacies. Be sure to call your pharmacy ahead of time, as demand is high. You can also get at-home tests through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the United States Postal Service (USPS) here: <https://www.covidtests.gov/>.

If you have a positive COVID-19 at-home test kit, please report it here: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6715540/Home-Test-Report>.

Employers are critical to our understanding of outbreaks. If you are an employer and would like to report a positive test result from your organization, please do so at: covidreporting@dhd10.org.

For more information on COVID-19, visit www.dhd10.org/coronavirus.

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