

MEDIA RELEASE

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Public Health
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COUNTY OF ERIE
OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Erie County encourages vaccinations ahead of Thanksgiving gatherings; reports new COVID-19 cases and deaths

Erie, PA — County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper and Erie County Department of Health announce public health updates on COVID-19 in Erie County. Vaccinations are strongly encouraged as community members start preparing for Thanksgiving and year-end gatherings and related travel.

The benefit of vaccination is that it helps the body prevent severe illness and lessens the likelihood of needing hospitalization. Free vaccines are available for residents of Erie County ages 5 years and older. To find vaccines in nearby locations:

- text ZIP Code to 438829
- visit vaccines.gov
- call 1-800-232-0233

For schedule of upcoming mobile clinics and other vaccination sites, visit eriecountypa.gov/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine. Not all locations can offer COVID-19 vaccines to children 5 to 11 years old. Call ahead to check availability.

New cases

In Erie County, 239 new positive cases of COVID-19 were reported on Nov. 17, bringing the cumulative case count to 33,276. Since March 2020, the total number of reinfections is 280 and the total deaths due to COVID-19 is 573.

[Information](#) on cases in Erie County and other data such as reports on vaccination demographics can be found at eriecountypa.gov/covid-19. Related data is also available at the Pennsylvania Department of Health website health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Cases.aspx.

Importance of getting tested

The public is strongly discouraged from hosting or attending gatherings if positive for COVID-19, exhibiting its symptoms or have been in close contact with anyone who has COVID-19.

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Community members are reminded to get tested for COVID-19 if exposed to anyone who is positive for COVID-19 or if exhibiting its symptoms such as coughing, difficulty breathing, fever or chills, muscle or body aches, vomiting or diarrhea, or loss of taste or smell.

Testing results can help determine appropriate care and treatment if needed. Rapid testing results are available in 15 minutes at free mobile testing clinics organized by the Erie County Department of Health. No insurance is needed and walk-ups are welcome.

- **Monday, Nov 22, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at Northwestern Food Pantry, 1 Robb and Powell Ave., Albion

For schedule of upcoming mobile testing clinics and other testing sites, visit eriecountypa.gov/covid-19/covid-19-testing-information.

Masking order

A universal indoor masking order for all public and private pre-schools, primary and secondary schools in Erie County is in effect until further notice. A copy of the order can be found at eriecountypa.gov/covid-19.

Erie County currently has a high rate of transmission according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). CDC guidelines recommend all people, including those who are fully vaccinated, should wear masks indoors in areas with substantial to high transmission rates of COVID-19. Data on transmission rates can be found at the CDC website covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view.

Wearing a mask that covers the mouth and nose has been proven to reduce the spread of infectious respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19. Studies on the effects of wearing masks have proved that there is no change in oxygen or carbon dioxide levels when people wear cloth and surgical masks while resting and exercising.

For guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19 at events and business establishments, contact Erie County Department of Health at covidresponse@eriecountypa.gov. All other questions about COVID-19 can be directed to 814-451-6700 or ecdhinfo@eriecountypa.gov.

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