

MEDIA RELEASE

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



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COUNTY OF ERIE
OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Erie County school mask order to stay in effect; provides other public health updates on COVID-19

Erie, PA — County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper and the Erie County Department of Health held a press briefing to provide public health updates on COVID-19. Guests included Melissa Lyon, Director of the Erie County Department of Health. Watch the press briefing [here](#).

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

“Our goal is continuous in-person learning for Erie County students,” said Dahlkemper. “We know in-person instruction has the best outcomes academically and economically for most families. Masking in schools has been shown to reduce the need for quarantine and isolation, allowing our students to attend school with less interruption.”

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.

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.

New cases

There were a reported 225 new cases of COVID-19 and five deaths on Nov. 23, bringing the cumulative case count to 34,725. Among the cases reported, two were reinfections, bringing the cumulative number of reinfections to 298. Since March 2020, the total deaths due to COVID-19 is 587.

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[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.

Benefit of vaccination

Vaccinations are strongly encouraged as community members prepare 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 local 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.

Importance of testing

Testing for COVID-19 is recommended 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.

- **Monday, Nov 29, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at Presque Isle Down and Casino, 8199 Perry Highway, Erie

For schedule of other local testing sites, visit eriecountypa.gov/covid-19/covid-19-testing-information.

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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