

MEDIA RELEASE

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



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COUNTY OF ERIE
OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Erie County recommends health measures for year-end gatherings

Erie, PA — County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper and Erie County Department of Health recommend health measures for upcoming year-end gatherings to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Get vaccinated.
- At gatherings, wear properly-fitting masks that cover the nose and mouth. Practice social distancing as reasonably as possible.
- Wash hands properly.
- Stay home if not feeling well and get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible.
- If test results are positive, stay home and stay apart from others in your household.
- Whenever possible, provide ventilation (air-flow) into rooms. Despite the cold weather, some ways to improve ventilation include cracking open windows for a short while, turning on kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans, and using air purifiers with a HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter. Other tips can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/interactive-ventilation-tool.html>

Erie County Department of Health highly recommends vaccination and boosters for all eligible residents of Erie County five years and older, including for those who are pregnant. The benefit of vaccination is that it helps the body prevent severe illness and lessens the likelihood of needing hospitalization.

Wearing masks 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.

If having concerns or questions about vaccines, approach healthcare professionals or contact the Erie County Department of Health at 814-451-6700 for facts and answers. For guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19 at events and business establishments, contact covidresponse@eriecountypa.gov.

New cases

In Erie County, 167 new cases of COVID-19 were reported on Dec. 28, increasing the total case count to 40,770. Total deaths remain at 659.

—MORE—

Information on cases and deaths in Erie County and other data such as reports on vaccination demographics can be found at the Erie County Government website <https://eriecountypa.gov/covid-19/positive-cases-in-erie-county/>. Latest recommendations and related data is also available at the websites of

- Pennsylvania Department of Health health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Cases.aspx
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view

Locations and schedules of vaccination sites

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 getting tested

Unvaccinated or vaccinated, testing is recommended if exposed to anyone who has COVID-19 or if exhibiting symptoms such as sore throat, 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. The Information Sheet and Consent Form can be downloaded from eriecountypa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/COVID-Testing-Info-Sheet-and-Consent-Form.pdf, printed and filled out in advance before going to the clinic. To follow up results, email zheeter@lecom.edu.

- **Monday, Jan. 3, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at Saint John the Evangelist Parish Banquet & Conference Center, 1001 Main St. East, Girard

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

Stay home, inform close contacts

To prevent the spread of infection to others, community members should stay home while waiting for test results. Those whose test results are positive, even if they do not have symptoms, should:

- stay home
- stay apart from others in their homes and, if possible, use a separate bathroom
- inform their close contacts to stay home and get tested

For guidance on quarantine and isolation, call the Erie County Department of Health at 814-451-6700.

Erie County currently has a high rate of transmission, according to the 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.

All other questions about COVID-19 can be directed to 814-451-6700 or ecdinfo@eriecountypa.gov.

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