



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Macon County Health Department
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Reminders and Updates from the Macon County Health Department

As you have noticed in recent days and weeks, we are having a surge in positive cases in Macon County and throughout the state. Our positivity rate and number of hospitalizations have also shown an increase. Although our message to the community is not changing, we hope that these increases will perhaps encourage everyone to listen to these messages and take them as seriously as possible. We have also recently shared the 'sources' and/or 'locations' of these cases, but continue to hear questions regarding why, where, and how cases are spreading. We are also hopeful that sharing this information again will bring clarity and a sense of responsibility to everyone.

- If you receive notification that you have received a positive test result, please remember that *you* generally receive your results significantly before they are dropped into our systems. Sometimes it can be 1-2 days before your positive result comes to the local health department. Therefore, if you know you are positive and have not heard from our staff yet, it is because we have not received your information yet. It may also be because someone is trying to reach you and has been unable to do so. Our phone numbers pop up as several different numbers, locations, and sometimes spam. Please answer the phone so that we can connect with you.
- DO NOT wait to hear from the health department to begin isolating or quarantining. If you are symptomatic, you should already be quarantining away from others. You should be at home, separated from those in your home if possible. If you have gotten tested, you should be quarantining at home until you get results. If you receive a positive test result, you should be isolating at home immediately. If you have been notified that you are a close contact of a person with COVID-19, you should be immediately quarantining yourself from others. We, IDPH, and the CDC have provided isolation and quarantine guidance for months. You can find the guidance here: <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/isolation-quarantine> Please responsibly adhere to this guidance when appropriate. You should not wait until the health department tells you to do so.
- Contact tracing can only be as strong as the information provided by the person with a positive test result. If someone does not list their employer, locations visited, and/or close contacts, the contact tracer will not call those entities/people. The more information we receive from the confirmed case, the more thorough the contact tracing efforts and prevention taken will be.
- Our staff throughout the Macon County Health Department are working tirelessly to get calls returned, information updated, and contact tracing completed. Staff are fielding hundreds of calls and messages per day. We are prioritizing these calls, messages, and other responsibilities as much as possible. We are also constantly hiring on new staff to assist with these functions and working to improve speed and efficiency as the need grows daily.
 - If you have left a message, we will call you back as quickly as possible. If you have not heard back by the next business day, please call us back. There is a chance someone has tried to reach out to you and was unable to reach you.

- If you have received notification that your test result is positive, you should not be waiting to hear from the health department to start isolating. You should already be doing that.
- We have provided common types of hot spots and outbreak locations, which mirror what is being seen throughout the state. However, *you* have the power to positively impact these risks. The health department handles the education, prevention, and contact tracing. However, if/when cases do occur, that is expected with a virus and pandemic. Every resident needs to do everything within their power to try to eliminate the risk and potential for spread. The health department cannot control that. We have strongly encouraged everyone to limit risk and take precautions. We have also strongly encouraged everyone to behave as if everyone, including themselves, has COVID-19, because it is spread throughout our entire community. If you all behave as if everyone has it, you will eliminate risk and spread.

As a reminder, here are some examples of where/how the virus has been spreading locally:

 - Large and small gatherings including, but not limited to: weddings, funerals, parties, meetings
 - Congregate settings including, but not limited to long-term care facilities and schools
 - Sports
 - Crowded bars, restaurants, or other facilities
 - People going to work symptomatic, some stating they thought it was, “allergies, sinus congestion, head cold, etc;” in some cases, they were at work several days before knowing they had COVID and were subsequently passing to others
 - Groups of friends or family members getting together and passing it to one another; then taking back to several households
 - People gathering and not masking or social distancing, stating that they “know who they are with and they are not sick;” remember, people can be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic and be spreading the virus
 - Refusal to wear a mask appropriately or at all
 - Lack of following public health guidance
 - Cases among the community at-large
- You still have the power to help change these numbers! Please remember taking precautionary measures can help decrease the risk of spread. As a reminder, here is what you can do to make a positive difference:
 - Avoid large gatherings
 - Avoid small gatherings (unless you can adequately social distance)
 - Social distance EVEN when wearing a mask or cloth face covering; *masking is not a substitute for social distancing!*
 - Wear a mask and wear it the right way
 - Participate in contact tracing if contacted by the health department
 - Once you receive your results, please do not wait for the call from the MCHD; you should stay home and isolate immediately
 - Adhere to isolation and quarantine guidance if directed
 - Stay home if you are sick
 - Stay home if you are awaiting test results
 - Wash your hands AND clean and disinfect surfaces adequately and frequently
 - Adhere to all public health guidance

Our team is passionate about public health and committed to serving you all the time, especially during a pandemic. Our staff is working diligently to provide you with the information you need and doing so as quickly as possible. Thank you to those of you who have been adhering to public health

guidance and doing everything you possibly can to keep yourself and others safe. We encourage everyone in the community to take personal responsibility to limit the spread of illness and save lives. We need everyone to do their part *now*.