

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Delaware County Weekly COVID-19 Updates

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The following COVID-19 update is brought to you through a collaboration of healthcare partners including Delaware County Health Department, Delaware County Emergency Management Agency, Delaware County Office of Information, and other major healthcare providers. Delaware County weekly COVID-19 updates are released every Thursday and include information from the Indiana State Department of Health county metrics dashboard, which is updated every Wednesday afternoon.

This week, Delaware County has remained “orange” in the [Indiana State Department of Health’s county metrics map](#). Orange is the second-to-worst score a county can receive, indicating the area is approaching a high level of community spread of COVID-19.

Based on the state’s [new guidelines](#) for COVID restrictions, all gatherings in Delaware County are limited to 50 people, and all K–12 events are capped at 25% capacity. Social distancing and the wearing of face masks in public buildings remain required throughout the state.

As of Nov. 19, Delaware County has reported 525 new cases and 7 new deaths since the last COVID-19 report 7 days ago. The county’s 7-day positivity rate is at 8%; the CDC suggests this number should be well under 5%. IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital is treating 64 confirmed cases, 35 of which are Delaware County residents. IU Health announced it will begin implementing [visitor restrictions](#) for all hospitals in its system beginning today, Nov. 19.

“No matter your age, health or history, please continue to wear a mask, avoid groups and crowds, wash your hands frequently, and stay home and isolated when you feel sick,” Dr. Jeff Bird, president of IU Health East Central Region, wrote in a [media release](#). “Please know we are far from being out of the woods. And please take a moment to thank a frontline worker, offer encouragement and know that the value of a kind word can change the trajectory of someone’s day.”

Schools continue to be a “hotspot” for cases—this week, Muncie Community Schools announced its Southside Middle School would be moving to eLearning, effective immediately, until Nov. 30 due to one positive case that forced the entire office staff and administration to quarantine. East Washington Academy has five classrooms of students on quarantine due to a roaming teacher who recently tested positive.

“It’s unfortunate we’ve had to transition Southside and some EWA classrooms to eLearning, but we’re prepared for that,” said Lee Ann Kwiatkowski, CEO/director of public education at MCS. “Ironically, we have fewer positive cases this month than at this time last month, but a lot more people affected by quarantines this month. We’ll continue to keep our in-school program operating as long as we can.”

Ball State University, as of Nov. 18, has 89 active cases among its students and staff, with 68.7% of its quarantine space available. In addition to moving all instruction online for the rest of the fall semester after Thanksgiving, the university will be requiring all students to get tested for COVID-19 before returning to campus in January.

With Thanksgiving right around the corner, health officials stress the continued use of precautions, even around other family members. The [CDC's Thanksgiving guidelines](#) encourage citizens to wear masks, to dine outdoors if possible, and to avoid traveling, among other things.

“People may ask how we can give up these family traditions, when we’ve already gone through eight months of sometimes stressful and depressing isolation,” Hank Milius, president and CEO of Meridian Health Services, wrote in a [media release](#). “But that’s exactly the point. We should be having these discussions with family members because we should not let that sacrifice be for naught.”

For more information on Delaware County’s COVID-19 total cases and deaths, as well as testing location information, visit [dcema.com](#).

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Frequently Asked Questions

Should I/my child get tested for COVID-19 even if only mild cold-like symptoms, like a runny nose, are present?

Anyone experiencing symptoms of illness should isolate at home to avoid the risk of spreading illness to others. With the improved availability of testing, DCHD would further recommend testing to any such individual. Additional information concerning when you can return to work and what to do if your test is positive is available for review at [cdc.gov](#).

If I test positive for COVID-19, how should close contacts be informed?

Anyone who tests positive should proactively seek to notify anyone they have had close contact with, as far back as 48 hours before their symptom onset. Positive individuals should also cooperate with any contact tracing calls they receive from the State, so that state contact tracers can also document and notify close contacts of their need to quarantine.

What should I do if I witness a business and/or citizen failing to comply with guidelines from the state or county?

Complaints can be lodged through the Delaware County Health Department Citizen Complaint Form, most easily available through the Delaware County Coronavirus Hub at [dcema.com](#).

Will getting a flu shot protect me from COVID-19?

While some evidence exists that the flu vaccine may help with protection against COVID-19, this vaccine should not be considered a protection against COVID-19. Instead, protection against influenza infection may prove beneficial to the population by lowering the number of flu illnesses overall and freeing up space in the healthcare system for those infected with COVID-19 or needing other healthcare.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

People who have COVID-19 may exhibit any range of these symptoms, and some may even show no symptoms at all. Symptoms may appear 2–14 days after being exposed to the virus. Some symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat

- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Anyone with these symptoms should stay home as much as possible and limit their exposure to others. Children who have any of the above symptoms should be kept home from school. For more information, read the Indiana State Department of Health's guidelines for returning to school [here](#).

What should I do if I think I might have COVID-19?

If you have any of the above symptoms or have been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, you should immediately begin to self-quarantine to prevent spreading the disease to others. You should also call a local health clinic to arrange to be tested. Follow your doctor's orders and continue to self-quarantine until you receive negative test results.

Children who exhibit any of the above symptoms should NOT be sent to school. If your child shows any of the listed symptoms, keep the child home in quarantine and contact your healthcare provider for further guidance.

Where can I get tested?

Several local health clinics offer COVID-19 tests, including Meridian Health Services, Open Door Health Services, and more.

Open Door offers free community tests for individuals with or without symptoms, made available through a partnership with the Delaware County Health Department. (Insurance will billed if applicable.) Those who wish to get tested must register online in advance at opendoorhs.org/testing.

For a complete list of testing locations in Delaware County, visit the [Delaware County Indiana Coronavirus Hub](#). Be advised that some locations may test only those who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19.

Staying Safe from COVID-19

To keep yourself safe from COVID-19 and to reduce the spread of the disease, wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds, wear a mask when inside public spaces and when in crowded areas, and practice social distancing.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone who tested positive, schedule an appointment to get tested as soon as possible. Self-quarantine until you have received negative test results. A list of testing locations can be found on the [Delaware County Indiana Coronavirus hub](#).

Events with more than 50 attendees are required by the state government to be approved by the local health department. If you plan to host an event that may exceed 50 attendees, please contact the Delaware County Health Department at 765-747-7721 or DCHealth@co.delaware.in.us for guidance on how to proceed.