

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.

Delaware County remains orange the [Indiana State Department of Health's county metrics map](#)—the second-to-worst score a county can receive. Delaware County is one of just 19 counties throughout the state ranked orange; all others are red.

Although Delaware County is still orange, it is on the verge of turning red on the state's county metrics map. If Delaware County's 7-day positivity rate reaches 15%, and if its cases per 100,000 people remains above 200, then the county will become red. Counties that are ranked red have stricter precautions in place, including gathering limitations of 25 people or fewer.

Delaware County currently has 539 cases per 100,000 people and a 7-day positivity rate of 13.5%. The CDC suggests positivity rates should be well under 5%.

Since the last COVID-19 update on Jan. 7, the county has reported 488 new cases and 2 new deaths. As of Jan. 14, IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital is treating 63 confirmed cases, 39 of which are Delaware County residents.

Local health officials encourage residents to remain vigilant about COVID-19. This means continuing to wear a mask over one's mouth and nose, reducing exposure to others, washing hands frequently and, now, getting vaccinated when eligible. As of Jan. 13, healthcare workers and anyone over the age of 70 are eligible for a vaccine in Indiana.

"It has been very busy at the health department this week with the roll-out of the vaccinations. The available time slots have filled up rapidly," said Delaware County Health Officer Donna Wilkins. Wilkins also touched on common misconceptions about the COVID-19 vaccine. "If you test positive and have symptoms of COVID after your first vaccine, this would be due to your exposure to someone that has COVID and *not* from the vaccine. Most people have mild symptoms of arm soreness, fever and muscle aches after receiving the vaccine."

To become fully vaccinated, one must receive two doses of the vaccine three weeks apart. As of Jan. 14, more than 5,700 individuals in Delaware County have received at least the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Rachel Thompson, senior organizational development consultant for IU Health East Central Region, said receiving the first dose of her vaccine brings her "one step closer" to normal life.

“One step closer to actually being physically present with the people I’m here to support. To dancing with my wife at a concert. To having someone else clear the table. To traveling outside Indiana. To giving my mom a hug,” Thompson said. “One step closer.”

Those who are eligible for the vaccine will be notified via postal mail from the state, as well as through additional communications efforts. Eligibility information will also be shared online at ourshot.in.gov as updates become available. Local vaccination information can be found at OurShotDelawareCounty.org. To schedule a vaccination, visit ourshot.in.gov or call 211. There is no charge for the vaccination.

For those who are not yet eligible to receive the vaccine, health officials encourage the continuation of diligent testing and contact tracing.

Open Door Health Services has expanded its testing services at community partner sites. Partner sites now currently include Avondale United Methodist Church, the Buley Center, Boys & Girls Clubs of Muncie, two Housing Authority communities and Ball State University. Community testing remains available five days a week at Open Door’s 333. S. Madison St. location in downtown Muncie. Visit opendoorhs.org/testing for more information.

Ball State University, whose spring semester begins Monday, is requiring all students to get tested before returning to campus.

Muncie Community Schools, as of Jan. 14, has 18 active cases throughout its district. Two full classrooms at East Washington Academy are in quarantine due to teachers who tested positive, and Northside Middle School has moved to remote learning until Jan. 19.

“We are starting to get more people going through our substitute teacher trainings, which is great,” said Lee Ann Kwiatkowski, director of public education/CEO of Muncie Community Schools. “We need more subs who are available on short notice, and we appreciate the people who are willing to step up and help. Anyone interested can fill out the application on our [website](#).”

Families with children in school can find additional resources—including information on housing and financial assistance, food support, emotional support, remote learning and more—at educationsupporthub.com.

For more information on Delaware County’s COVID-19 total cases and deaths, testing location information and vaccine availability updates, visit dcema.org.

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Frequently Asked Questions

How do I get vaccinated for COVID-19?

As of Jan. 11, Indiana residents age 70 and older, as well as healthcare workers, are eligible to receive their COVID-19 vaccination. There is no charge for the vaccination.

Individuals can schedule online or by phone.

To schedule online:

- Visit ourshot.IN.gov and follow the instructions to find a vaccine site.
- The site will ask questions to make sure you meet criteria.

- A map will display vaccination sites closest to you.
- Choose a site and register for a date and time.

To schedule by phone:

- For those unable to register online, call 211 to register by phone. The call center is open daily from 8 a.m.–9 p.m.

Other notes of importance:

- Registering another individual on their behalf is permitted.
- Transportation assistance can be requested by calling 211.
- Citizenship is not required for vaccination, and citizenship information is not collected.
- Photo ID may be required at the time of vaccination.

Local vaccination information can be found at OurShotDelawareCounty.org.

How will I know when I become eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine?

Those who are eligible for the vaccine will be notified via postal mail from the state, as well as through additional communications efforts. Eligibility information will also be shared online at ourshot.IN.gov as updates become available.

Will vaccines allow an immediate return to normal? What should people expect over the next few months?

We should not expect a significant impact from the vaccines anytime soon. The vaccine supply will arrive in phases and is expected to be very limited in quantity initially.

I got tested for COVID-19. Now what?

Individuals who get tested because they have symptoms should quarantine after their test until they receive their results. If the test is positive, they must continue to isolate. Isolation can end after ALL of the following have occurred:

- 10 days have passed since onset of symptoms
- If fever was a symptom, 24 hours have passed with no fever, without use of fever-reducing drugs
- Other symptoms are improving (however, loss of taste/smell may persist and does not to be factored into this requirement)

However, a person who has tested positive should follow their healthcare provider's advice on when to end isolation.

The official recommendation for quarantine of someone identified as a close contact remains at 14 days. The CDC has recently announced options for shortening this timeframe to 10 or even possibly 7 days, if certain criteria are met. We suggest these options only be considered for use by individuals who would fall under the CDC guidelines for "Critical Infrastructure." Employers retain the ability to, and are recommended to, require 14-day quarantine of any potentially exposed staff members. The 7- and 10-day options, in summary:

- Quarantine can end after day 10 without testing and if **NO** symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring.
- When testing is readily available, quarantine can end as early as day 7 with a negative test result; **HOWEVER**, the test can be conducted no earlier than day 5 of the quarantine period.

In either situation, after stopping quarantine, people should

- Watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure.

- If they have symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact their local public health authority or healthcare provider, as well as their employer if necessary.
- Wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet from others, wash their hands, and avoid crowds.

Again, the standing recommendation for quarantine of close contacts remains at 14 days.

For more information, please visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine) or [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine).

What is a “close contact”?

The CDC definition of “close contact” includes the following:

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more, with or without masks. (This is 15 total minutes over the course of 24 hours. E.g., three five-minute periods of time throughout one day would count as close contact.)
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19.
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them).
- You shared eating or drinking utensils.
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

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](https://www.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.org](https://www.dcema.org).

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](#).

Families with children in school can find additional information and resources at educationsupporthub.com.

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. Families with children in school can find additional information and resources at educationsupporthub.com.

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. Those who wish to get tested are required to register online in advance at opendoorhs.org/testing.

Open Door also provides neighborhood-based testing at community partner sites. Partner sites currently include Avondale United Methodist Church, the Buley Center, Boys & Girls Clubs of Muncie, two Housing Authority communities, and Ball State University. Visit www.opendoorhs.org/testing for more information. Pre-registration at partner sites is not required.

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](#).

Under state mandate, gatherings in Delaware County are currently limited to no more than 50 people. Events with more than 50 attendees will not be approved by the Delaware County Health Department.