

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH COMMISSIONER



Dear Community Members:

Almost two years into the pandemic, we're experiencing yet another surge in the virus. It is difficult not to be numb to the messages and news stories again. It is equally difficult not to be angry at the return of protective masks and to events that are changed. Everyone is frustrated and we all want to be free from hospital beds at capacity and illness in general. I want to use this space to address a few questions we've been hearing recently, but also to offer some comfort to you that this surge will end and things will look different.

Testing Information

Similar to where we were last year at this time, the demand for testing is outpacing testing resourcing across the nation. If a test is not readily available to you, the best thing to do is just stay home and away from others. It's important for employees who are ill to take the full, required isolation time away from the workplace so illness is not spread to others and business functions are not interrupted.

A person with COVID symptoms, or those with a known exposure to the virus, should follow the new CDC guidance for isolation and quarantine. After day 5 at home, employees should be able to return to work with a mask without having to test if a test is not readily available. The same is true for students returning to the classroom.

The Health Department has PCR testing available by appointment and we have tripled the slot available each day. Mass COVID-19 testing locations are state-sponsored and National Guard supporting. Locations operating near Medina are in Cleveland and Akron, with additional Ohio locations coming soon. The following links have information on registration:

- [Cleveland: Walker Center \(Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals\), 10524 Euclid Ave., Cleveland](#)
- [Akron: Atrium Testing Site \(Summa Health\), 1077 Gorge Blvd., Akron](#)

At-home test kits offer immediate results, but the overwhelming demand has put a huge strain on manufacturers and the state supply. When at-home COVID test kits first became available early last year, this health department began requesting them from the state and pushing them for public distribution through participating library locations. The state soon started supplying kits directly to libraries and schools as demand increased. The Health Department now receives fewer kits for use with certain outbreaks, congregate settings, short-term testing efforts, and in situations to maintain essential services.

What's Next?

Since early 2020, the health department has been managing all aspects of COVID response. As responsible stewards of our resources, we've recognized we're only a certain size and there is only so much a single agency can do. We rely on and are grateful for agency partners who have assisted us in different ways. That collaborative effort will continue and the Health Department will continue to offer resources and make adjustments where we can.

If there's anything I need community members to take away from this message it's this: get vaccinated, stay home if you're sick, take care of yourself, and continue to have grace for one another. With the amount of disease spread, the most important thing you can do is take the tools available to you and use them! Think about your risk and be mindful when moving through public spaces. [MyCOVIDRisk](#) is an online tool that can help determine your risk before participating in an activity. You can plug in your geographical location and it calculates your risk based on the incidence level and your type of activity.

Not unlike other waves we've weathered throughout the pandemic, we too will ride this one out. Thank you to everyone reading this message and for hanging in there. There is illness but there's an equal amount of information and tools available to protect yourself and your loved ones.