

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH COMMISSIONER



Dear Community Members:

Vaccine distribution is underway in Medina County. Over the last two weeks, county EMS responders were vaccinated. By the end of this week, the Health Department will have completed five vaccination clinics for direct-care medical workers.

We recognize there are many questions surrounding the vaccine roll-out. Governor DeWine recently announced his hopes to move to Phase 1B within the coming weeks. Vaccinations in this category will include a balance between school personnel and adults over the age of 65. With this announcement, we recognize there is much excitement and anticipation from individuals in this group but also a lot of questions on when and what the plan is to schedule an appointment.

Medina County expects to receive around 300 doses per week for the time being. Supply is very limited and we will not have enough to cover everyone in the 1B category right away. Planning discussions are occurring both locally and on the state level and we hope to have more information for you very soon.

Medina County does not have a waiting list to sign up to receive the vaccine. With the limited supply and very targeted groups eligible right now, we are working directly with employers, community partners, and organizations. When the time comes to begin non-school affiliated 1B, that information will be communicated through local partners such as our senior centers, local libraries, community cable channels, newspapers, and social media platforms. Information will also be sent to churches throughout the county who have registered with us to receive information.

Should I be concerned about the UK virus variant?

Over time, it is typical for viruses to change through mutation. These changes are not usually a cause for concern because the behavior of the virus doesn't change. The new UK variant does not appear to be more severe or have more of an impact on those who are already immune. However, it is notable because studies are finding that it is much more contagious and can spread more easily.

What's worrisome about a more contagious virus is that more people can become sick at a much faster rate. The variant hasn't been reported in Ohio yet, but it is likely that it will happen at some point. Public health is prepared for this. Understanding and monitoring this reinforces how important it is to continue to practice our key safety measures of wearing a mask, being mindful in our interactions, and getting the vaccine when it's available.

Why monitoring your symptoms is so important

Even with the promise of the vaccine, coronavirus is still widely spread throughout our community. Taking personal responsibility as citizens is important to continue to curb the spread of the virus. The mix of coronavirus, flu, and seasonal cold sharing similar symptoms makes it difficult to determine what illness someone has. If you have any symptoms, even mild ones, the Health Department is asking you to stay away from others and seek testing. Testing is so important because it not only lets you know what is happening in your body, but it helps us protect others and prevent potential outbreaks in places like your workplace, school, or congregate care settings. There are several locations in Medina County to get tested. A list of those places can be found on our website here: <https://medinahealth.org/community/current-outbreaks/testing/>

Where can I find the latest information?

As information is made available, we will continue to update our website with resources about the vaccine: <https://medinahealth.org/community/current-outbreaks/>. You are also encouraged to visit the Ohio Department of Health's website for resources related to the COVID-19 vaccine: coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine.