

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH COMMISSIONER



Dear Community Members:

The Ohio Department of Health completed a research project over the summer to study the prevalence of COVID-19 in adults across Ohio. The purpose of the project was to measure two specific factors: how many people actively had coronavirus at the time of the study and how many people had coronavirus in the past. The hope was that the results would provide a better understanding to how the virus has spread across the state and reveal how many people are still susceptible to getting sick.

Over a 20 day period, the Ohio Department of Health tested 727 randomly selected individuals who voluntarily participated. They found that 0.9% of the individuals tested had a current COVID-19 infection, and 1.5% had antibodies, meaning they had evidence of a past infection.

The full study can be found here: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/dashboards/prevalence-covid19-ohioadults.pdf>

While the data from this study does not tell us exactly how many people have or had novel coronavirus, it does indicate that the prevalence of the disease in Ohio is low. This study occurred at a time when Ohio was seeing over 1,000 new cases a day. Given that detail, you might have expected to see a much higher percentage of people with antibodies. The fact this study did not see that level means there are still many, many people at risk for getting sick and spreading this virus. We know that in the average adult, antibodies to this virus appear for about three months after infection. What is unknown is whether or not people can become infected again, and whether or not a new infection will be more mild or harmful. Only time and research after another wave of illness in the world will help answer that question.

COVID-19 continues to surprise us. We've seen cases rise and fall over the past four weeks and it's likely we will continue to see illness throughout the state fluctuate as time goes on. When positive cases seem low, I know we all feel hopeful that we can lift some of the restrictions still in place. We have to remain vigilant in our actions to minimize spread as we learn more about the virus.

Updates to data map

A couple of weeks ago, we made some changes to the zip code map on the Health Department's coronavirus data dashboard. We've recently received some questions related to cases per area so I wanted to remind the public that we switched the map from case range to case rate for each zip code (under the zip code number in parentheses). The rates reflect the past 12 weeks of cases per 10,000 people in the zip code. This better shows the impact of disease spread within the county.

Where can I find the latest information?

Medina County Health Department's coronavirus data dashboard is updated every Friday afternoon. You can find the dashboard here:

www.medinahealth.org/community/current-outbreaks/data/. For other information and resources you can use to help make decisions that are best for you and your family, visit www.Medinahealth.org.

