

## A MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH COMMISSIONER

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Dear Community Members:

Testing capacity across the state is improving with turnaround times reducing significantly in recent weeks. The Medina County Health Department suspended pop-up testing when lab results began to take too long. We did this because the benefit of testing greatly reduces when there is a lag from testing to result. With labs now able to process specimens, we are again working on times and locations for expanded local viral testing.

Same day appointments for RT-PCR tests are available from the Health Department regardless of insurance status. You can call our main number and select option #1 to schedule if you are experiencing COVID symptoms. In addition, there is a pop-up viral testing location in nearby Avon Lake on August 19<sup>th</sup> from 9am-1pm and August 20<sup>th</sup> 2pm-6pm at 32850 Electric Blvd.

There have been many questions lately about antigen tests. Public health does not recommend antigen testing for return to work after travel or for release from quarantine. This type of test is able to provide results faster than a PCR test, but they have more limitations with disease detection. An antigen test can best detect disease response within the first five days of symptoms; but outside of this timeframe antigen levels may be too low and a negative result is possible even though a person could still have an active infection. Positive results from antigen tests are very reliable and are reported to the Health Department just as RT-PCR tests under federal law.

### Returning to School

A couple of weeks ago, we talked about the [disease progression of COVID-19](#) and why quarantine after exposure is so important. With schools starting back up, we've had some questions about how we can be returning to schools and sports this fall, knowing how the disease spreads.

The Health Department has provided advice and resources to consider as schools developed return plans for instruction and extracurricular activities. Each district carefully considered the safety measures that will be used and have solid plans, but the truth is that the plans to return safely rely a great deal on what happens outside of the classroom and off the playing field. All of our actions at our friends' homes and social gatherings will affect what is being brought inside the schools. If you or anyone in your household has any symptoms of illness, the entire household should stay home. When you and your family members are out in the public, wearing a mask and avoiding situations where potential exposure could happen are the best things you can do right now as our community heads back to school.

### Update on Data

The Health Department is committed to educating and providing residents with the best information we have available. My goal has been to give the most accurate and timely picture to you of what is happening with COVID-19 in our county. This past week the zip code map on the Health Department dashboard was updated with case rates rather than total number of cases for the previous 12 weeks. The change was made to allow an equal comparison between our different sized zip codes. An equal number of cases between zip codes does not mean that the disease burden is equal between them if one has a significantly larger population.

### Where can I find the latest information?

[Medinahealth.org](http://Medinahealth.org) or [Coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://Coronavirus.ohio.gov) have the latest real-time information. You can find health and safety messages and information you can use to help make decisions that are best for you and your family. Information on re-opening schools and helping your child get comfortable wearing a mask can be found here: <https://medinahealth.org/community/current-outbreaks/schools/>