

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH COMMISSIONER



Dear Community Members:

Infection remains high in Medina County and throughout the region. There is a lot going on and I want community members to have the tools they need to make choices that are not only best for themselves, but for the community as a whole.

The role of public health is to serve as a resource, providing data and information to guide informed decision making. We're here to let you know what's going on and offer the best recommendations we can for strategies that can help. Everyone's risk tolerance is different and what works for one person or family may not be best for the next. I ask that grace be extended towards one another as those individual decisions are made. We remain neighbors and all want the best for our county.

Throughout the pandemic, we've witnessed acts of service and kindness as the community rallied around one another. This may be a time more than ever where compassion is needed as we navigate new challenges as they arise.

Schools

The Health Department recognizes the ongoing concern with students missing school due to COVID exposure. We have been working with local, regional and state partners to review data and exploring options. Quarantining persons exposed to an infectious disease is not a new concept; it has been used since the 14th century to control disease spread. The goal in considering adjustments to the current process is to keep students in a learning environment while balancing the health.

The new vaccine incentive program announced by the state offers a bit of excitement for kids 12 years and up. The lottery hasn't opened yet but you can prepare by getting your vaccine now. Keep an eye on the [ODH COVID-19 website](#) for more information on that.

Booster Shots and Third Doses

Early this week, a single booster dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine was authorized for [limited populations](#) at least six months following completion of the primary series. The purpose of the booster dose is to strengthen waning immunity and bolster protection against serious outcomes including hospitalization and death for individuals who are at higher risk for a more serious outcome if infected. As of now, those who received the Pfizer vaccine are only eligible. Guidance for people who received the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccine is expected in the coming weeks. If you're not eligible for a booster quite yet, there is no reason to be concerned that you aren't protected. Studies are indicating that citizens not in those groups still have sufficient immunity to fight off infection.

For the very small percentage of the [population who are severely immunocompromised](#) and potentially had an insufficient or weaker initial response to the recommended two-dose mRNA vaccine series, a third dose was authorized for both Pfizer and Moderna. There are some people who are immunocompromised and aren't able to build the same level of immunity after vaccination the way non-immunocompromised people do, and benefit from an additional dose to ensure enough protection against the virus.

If you fall into either of these groups, it's still advised to talk to your doctor about what's best for you. We are accepting both walk-in or scheduled appointments for these vaccines at the Health Department every Tuesday from 12:30 pm to 6:30 pm or at clinics throughout the community. A list of locations and dates are listed on our [website](#) as well as posted on our social media channels.

What's Next?

I encourage you to stay informed of the latest data and projections of what's coming down the pike on either the [Health Department](#) website, [ODH](#), or the [CDC](#). We are always available at the Health Department to answer questions by calling 330-723-9688, option 2 or by email through vaccine@medinahealth.org.