



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## **Butler County General Health District**

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Butler County General Health District

### **Butler County at Level 3/Red According to Public Health Advisory Alerting System for COVID-19**

BUTLER COUNTY, OH – For two weeks in a row Butler County has been ranked at Level 3/Red for COVID-19. This is the second highest of the four possible levels of the Public Health Advisory Alerting System. As of 7/09/2020 Butler County was placed on a watch list alongside Hamilton County and Cuyahoga County due to increased possibility of approaching Level 4/Purple. Nine other Ohio counties were placed at Level 3/Red. Currently, no Ohio counties are at Level 4/Purple.

The Public Health Advisory Alerting System consists of four levels that provide Ohioans with guidance as to the severity of the problem in the counties in which they live. The levels are determined by seven data indicators that identify the risk level for each county and a corresponding color code to represent that risk level. The current map can be found here: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/public-health-advisory-system/>

#### Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Analysis:

According to the data analysis by ODH, “During the past three weeks, Butler County’s COVID-19 cases increased, along with several other healthcare indicators. Between June 24 and June 30, Butler County had 181 cases, the largest number of COVID-19 cases in any week since the beginning of the pandemic. From June 16 until July 3, the average new cases per day doubled from 15 to 29. Due to clinical and reporting lags, these numbers may continue to grow for the reporting period. The community continues to experience early signs that more people are seeking medical care for COVID-19 symptoms. From June 16 to July 4, visits for COVID-19 to the emergency department tripled from an average 2 per day to 7. More people are also visiting their doctors and being diagnosed with COVID-19. Between June 16 and July 7, the average outpatient visits more than doubled from 15 to 38 visits per day. Butler County also hit a new threshold for the overall utilization rate for regional intensive care unit beds, which exceeded 80% during 5 of the last 7 days.”

#### Alert Indicators

The alert indicators that have been triggered in Butler County, and account for the Red/Level 3 status, are:

- Indicator 1 - New Cases Per Capita:
  - Flagged if greater than 50 cases per 100,000 residents over the last two weeks. Allows for counties with different population sizes to be appropriately compared.

- Indicator 2 - Sustained Increase in New Cases:
  - Flagged if increasing trend of at least 5 days in overall cases by onset date. Reflects disease spread in the population.
  
- Indicator 3 - Proportion of Cases Not Congregate Cases:
  - Flagged if proportion of cases that are not in a congregate setting goes over 50% in at least one of the last 3 weeks. Used as indicator of greater risk of community spread.
  
- Indicator 4 - Sustained Increase in Emergency Room Visits:
  - Flagged if increasing trend of at least 5 days in the number of visits to the emergency department with COVID-like illness or a diagnosis. Provides information on the health care seeking behavior of the population and a sense of how concerned residents are about their current health status and the virus.
  
- Indicator 5 - Sustained Increase in Outpatient Visits:
  - Flagged if increasing trend of at least 5 days in the number of people going to a health care provider with COVID symptoms who then receive a COVID confirmed or suspected diagnosis. Provides information on the health care seeking behavior of the population and a sense of how concerned residents are about their current health status and the virus.
  
- Indicator 7 - Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Bed Occupancy:
  - Flagged if percentage of the occupied ICU beds in each region goes above 80% for at least three days in the last week. Provides an indication of the capacity available to manage a possible surge of severely ill patients.

### Face Coverings

The Director's Order for Facial Coverings for Counties in a Level 3/Red Public Health Advisory does affect Butler County. In short, face coverings must be worn:

- In any indoor location that is not a residence
- Outdoors if an individual cannot consistently maintain 6ft distance from non-members of their household
- While utilizing public/private transportation resources such as buses or ride sharing

The full details of the Order can be found here: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/publicorders/Directors-Order-Facial-Coverings.pdf>

An FAQ for the Order can be found here: [http://health.bcoho.us/Mask%20Health%20Order%20FAQ\\_7.09.2020.pdf](http://health.bcoho.us/Mask%20Health%20Order%20FAQ_7.09.2020.pdf)

In order to ensure that all of our citizens have easy access to mandatory masks, BCGHD is working with our partners in County Government, Emergency Management, Fire and Law Enforcement to develop a plan to access face coverings, especially those individuals in our community that may have issues attaining face coverings.

Information on obtaining free face coverings can be found at: <http://www.butlercountyohio.org/ema/> under COVID-19 Updates and Details.

Action Steps for the Public:

- Limit activities as much as possible
- Follow all current Health Orders
- Wear a mask. This is a simple way to reduce the spread of droplets that could carry the virus.
- Wash your hands thoroughly. This is one of the most proven methods to prevent disease transmission.
- Take your temperature. While we know not everyone will get a fever, this is the most common symptom.
- Understand what is normal for you. If you feel off, something is probably off.
- Avoid gatherings. Some people never develop symptoms or get symptoms so mild that they do not know they are sick, but we know that they can spread it to others.
- Stay 6 ft. away from others. Studies show that this is likely the maximum range the virus can travel in droplets spread from your mouth. Make this even more effective by wearing your mask.
- Stay home if you're sick.

Individuals can also explore their local health department website, [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), or [Coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://www.coronavirus.ohio.gov) for more information about how they can protect themselves and others from COVID-19.

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