



Public Health
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**Butler County
General Health District**

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For Immediate Release

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Butler County COVID-19 Risk Level Remains in the Red

BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO: Yesterday, Governor Mike DeWine announced that for the fourth week in a row, Butler County has ranked at a Level 3/Red for COVID-19. This is the second highest of four possible levels within the Public Health Advisory System, a data-driven framework to assess the degree of the COVID-19 virus' spread and to engage and empower individuals, businesses, communities, local governments, and others in their response and actions.

"Butler County citizens did a great job the last few weeks in following the Governor's mask wearing instructions! We are really proud of all the people who are masking up and keeping apart. It isn't easy, but it is making a difference," said Jennifer Bailer, Health Commissioner for the Butler County General Health District (BCGHD).

"I have seen an increase in the public wearing masks across the county," said Carrie Yeager, Environmental Health Director. "We are working very hard to follow up on all the complaints we receive about those not wearing masks, and we encourage everyone to be in compliance with the mask order."

"While we are so happy that Butler County did not reach the highest Level, Purple, yet we remain very concerned. We ask the public to be vigilant about mask wearing and social distancing so we can remain in the Red and move towards Orange or even Yellow," says Bailer.

A summary from the Public Health Advisory System on Butler County states, "During the past two weeks, Butler County's COVID-19 cases increased by 20%, along with several other healthcare indicators. From June 23 until July 5, the average new cases per day increased from 25 to 35. Due to clinical and reporting lags, these numbers may continue to grow for this reporting period. The community continues to experience early signs that more people are seeking medical care for COVID-19 symptoms. From June 23 to July 11, COVID-19 related visits to the emergency department increased from an average of 4 per day to 8. More people are visiting their doctors and being diagnosed with COVID-19. Between June 23 and July 12, the average outpatient visits doubled from 20 to 42 visits per day. Continuing with the same trend as the previous week, Butler County's overall utilization rate for regional intensive care unit beds

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exceeded 80% during six of the past seven days. Multiple long-term care facility outbreaks have been reported in the recent weeks.”

According to the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), “The Public Health Advisory System is a color-coded system designed to supplement existing statewide orders through a data-driven framework to assess the degree of the virus’ spread and to engage and empower individuals, businesses, communities, local governments, and others in their response and actions. The 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 Ohio Department of Health updates and assesses new data on the seven indicators each Thursday. Governor DeWine speaks to the status of COVID-19 throughout Ohio and typically highlights the counties at high levels during his Thursday afternoon press conferences.

BCGHD recommends everyone to avoid the Three Cs: Crowded places, Confined spaces and Close contact with others not in your household. When in public, everyone should always wear a facial covering or mask securely over your nose and mouth and stay at least six feet from others not in your household.

A Word About Quarantine

“There seems to be misinformation about how long a person exposed to COVID-19 should quarantine, that is, stay home. It is critically important that the public understand the timing of quarantine and what it means,” says Bailer. According to the CDC, the incubation period for COVID-19 is 14 days from exposure to symptoms onset. Bailer continues, “A person who has come in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 should automatically quarantine for a full fourteen days,” says Bailer. “We have seen many situations where a contact has received a negative test result so they think they do not have to quarantine any longer. This is not true. The disease can take 14 days to develop, so a negative test on Day 2, 3, or 4 does not mean a person won’t develop symptoms on Day 11, 12, 13, or 14 even. All contacts of a case of COVID need to quarantine at home for 14-days from the last day when you were exposed to the virus.” For employers this means that a negative test does not mean that a person in quarantine should return to work without staying home for the full 14 days.

CDC Quarantine Recommendations:

- Anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.
- What counts as close contact?
 - You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes
 - You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
 - You had direct physical contact with the person (touched, hugged, or kissed them)
 - You shared eating or drinking utensils
 - They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you
- Stay home and monitor your health
 - Contact your local health department

- Stay home means to stay home. It does not include going to the store or stopping by work to grab some items, for example.
- Stay home for the full 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19. Even if you are tested and receive a negative test result, you could still develop COVID-19 within the 14-day period. A negative test does NOT mean you should return to usual activities. You must quarantine for the full 14 days.
- Watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19
- If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.
- Call your provider if you experience concerning symptoms.

Action Steps for the Public to prevent spread of COVID-19:

- 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 are sick.

For more information, visit the BCGHD website at health.bcoho.us, the ODH at coronavirus.ohio.gov or the CDC at CDC.gov.

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