



James A. Barcia
Bay County Executive

1200 Washington Avenue, Bay City, Michigan 48708
(989) 895-4003 * FAX (989) 895-4014
www.baycounty-mi.gov/Health

Joel R. Strasz
Public Health Officer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: All Media

From: Joel Strasz, Public Health Officer – Bay County Health Department

Date: August 18, 2021

Re: **Bay County Health Department Provides Updated COVID-19 Prevention Recommendations**
Vaccination, face masks highly recommended to slow the spread of COVID-19

BAY COUNTY, MICHIGAN –Over the past few weeks, Bay County, like other counties across the state of Michigan, has experienced a substantial rise in COVID-19 cases and transmission. According to state and local data, Bay County is now classified at the [high community transmission level](#) with a case rate of 100.8 per 100,000 persons (Time frame: Aug 05-Aug 12) and a test positivity rate of 10.3% (Time frame: Aug 03-Aug 10). If current trends continue, these rates are anticipated to further increase in the coming weeks.

Aligning with updated guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services \(MDHHS\)](#), Bay County Health Department highly recommends that when the community is experiencing substantial and high transmission levels, everyone, including fully vaccinated individuals, wear a face mask in public indoor settings to help prevent spread of the Delta variant and protect others. Wearing a face mask is particularly important when attending indoor public gatherings and where social distancing is not able to be maintained. Given the community transmission status change, the health department also encourages businesses, community and faith based organizations and event organizers to consider the latest public health recommendations when determining risk mitigation strategies for employees, customers, community members and events.

These recommendations are based on [emerging science](#) showing the Delta variant to be highly infectious and able to spread at greater rates than any other strains of COVID-19. Research shows that the COVID-19 vaccines provide protection against the Delta variant and most people who experience a breakthrough infection after being fully vaccinated report mild or no symptoms, with an extremely low risk of hospitalization and death. Past infection with COVID-19 does not assure protection from the Delta variant, so people who have had past COVID-19 infection are still strongly encouraged to get vaccinated. High vaccination coverage will not only reduce the spread of the virus, but also help prevent new, and possibly more concerning, variants from emerging.

A layered protection strategy should be followed to ensure a healthy environment, allowing all Bay County residents the best chance to remain healthy and physically present at work and in the classroom setting. Such strategy should include the following risk mitigation measures:

- Receive the COVID-19 vaccine, if eligible
- Wear your face mask while indoors
- Maintain good hygienic practices
- Avoid crowded, unventilated spaces and maintain distances
- Stay home when sick and get tested for COVID-19
- Adhere to isolation if you test positive for COVID-19 or quarantine if considered a close contact

At this time, 60% of Bay County residents over the age of 12 have initiated vaccination for COVID-19. [Vaccinations are available](#) through the Bay County Health Department, individual providers, Great Lakes Bay Health Center, and many area pharmacies.

Please do your part and help minimize the spread of COVID-19. For the latest and most accurate information regarding the COVID-19 please go to the Bay County Health Department website at <https://www.baycounty-mi.gov/Health/COVID19/>.