

Warren County Public Health urges home rapid tests before gatherings

Tests can help avoid spreading infections

As the time for holiday gatherings approaches, Warren County Health Services asks residents to consider taking advantage of home COVID-19 testing kits before attending an indoor residential event such as a Thanksgiving dinner or holiday party.

Home testing can help find asymptomatic or mild infections that might not be initially evident.

These home testing kits are available at many local pharmacies, are relatively inexpensive (\$25 or so for two tests in a kit) and minimally intrusive, using a nasal swab to get a sample that will yield test results in minutes.

Those who get positive results indicating they have COVID-19 should report those results to their physician and Warren County Health Services as soon as possible.

Community transmission of COVID-19 is significantly higher heading into the holidays this year than in 2020 as the Delta variant continues to drive infections.

Warren County's active case numbers reached pandemic highs as of Thursday. Hospitalizations were near record level as well.

While vaccinations have helped lower hospitalization rates and fatalities, infections continue to occur at a high level as colder weather results in people moving indoors for socialization.

Said Ginelle Jones, Warren County Health Services Director: "Getting a COVID-19 test before a gathering will provide some peace of mind that you are keeping your loved ones, particularly those who are most vulnerable, safe when you are getting together. We are finding many people are not aware that these tests are readily available. They can be a good tool to help us try to keep COVID-19 in check for the holidays."

Said Dr. William Borgos, Warren County Public Health Medical Director: "The very high COVID-19 prevalence rates in our community are putting an enormous strain on our primary care, urgent care, and hospital systems. Vaccination, use of rapid tests, staying home when sick, and indoor mask wearing are meant to reduce risk of infection. The more we individually and collectively reduce risk, the more we can continue to participate in the activities that are important to us. The recent approval of vaccinations for the 5-11 year-old age group is a major step forward. We strongly encourage that all eligible persons in our community take the opportunity to be vaccinated, and believe that by getting vaccinated and taking precautions as outlined, we can make strides to reduce this strain while still moving forward with our daily lives and activities."

In addition, Warren County Health Services recommends that those who are attending or hosting indoor gatherings in the coming months;

- Stay home if feeling any symptoms of illness.
- Use hand sanitizer or wash hands before eating or drinking.
- Open windows for extra ventilation, or consider an outdoor gathering if weather cooperates.
- [Follow CDC guidelines for high transmission areas](#), which includes use of masks or face coverings in public settings.

Warren County Health Services can be reached at 518-761-6580 for any questions about COVID-19 testing or protocols.