



HEALTH DISTRICT

Portage County Combined General Health District

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COVID-19 Stay-At-Home Health Advisory

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Extended: January 15, 2021

Portage County is experiencing a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases and the number of hospitalizations locally and within our region have dramatically increased to a point of concern. Based on the community COVID-19 testing that was recently conducted within Portage County via Visit Healthcare, our community spread is indicative of our positivity rate. These COVID-19 testing events from 11/10/2020 -12/10/2020 yielded a positivity rate of 22% for Portage County. (This data includes all individuals who tested positive for COVID-19.)

Portage County cumulative COVID-19 (laboratory confirmed) positive cases since March 2020 is now exceeding 6,200. According to the Ohio Public Health Advisory System, Portage County has received 1,290 cases over the last two weeks-12/1/2020-12/14/2020.

Additional guidance, advisement, warning and intervention is warranted to mitigate case growth and preserve hospital capacity. It is more important than ever to follow guidance from local, state, and federal officials on how to stop and slow the spread of the COVID-19 disease.

Taking the steps listed below is critical to preventing the spread of the virus, protecting the lives of you and your loved ones, and preserving our acute and other healthcare services and capacity.

Section 1. Stay-at-Home Advisory

Beginning on Friday, November 20, 2020, the Health Commissioner for the Portage County Combined General Health District advises all residents to stay at home to the greatest extent possible due to the rapid rise of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in the county. Residents are advised to only leave home to go to work or school, or for essential needs such as seeking medical care, going to the grocery store or pharmacy, picking up food, or receiving deliveries.

Additionally, residents are strongly advised to:

- a) Avoid traveling in and out of the state
- b) Forgo having guests in your homes and gathering in other people's homes during the upcoming holiday season.

This advisory shall remain in place for two consecutive incubation periods of the SARS-CoV-2 virus (28 days), or until such time as the Portage County Health District determines a change to the guidance is appropriate.

Section 2. Adherence to All Current Orders

All orders set forth by Governor R. Michael DeWine, the Ohio Department of Health, County, and the municipalities shall continue to be enforced and adhered to by all residents.

Section 3. Advisory on Indoor and Outdoor Meetings and Social Events

Residents are advised to limit meetings and social events to 10 individuals, from the issue date of this advisory. The advice applies to both indoor and outdoor events, birthday parties, and other events that may occur at a banquet hall, event venue or other similar space. This advisement also is intended for overall review and planning of events such as weddings or funerals. A meeting or social event that is outside of normal operations is advised to have no more than 10 individuals.

Section 4. Private Gatherings

Residents are strongly advised to not have any indoor gatherings with guests in their homes from other households.

Maintenance and general household repairs using hired workers (e.g. plumbing, heating, electrical) can continue provided that the COVID-19 preventative practices of masks, physical distancing, etc. are followed.

Section 5. Response to Illness and Exposure – Isolation and Quarantine

Residents that are exhibiting any signs and symptoms of COVID-19 must shelter in their place of residence. They shall not go to their workplace or congregate setting and shall only leave their place of residence to seek necessary clinical care, or for essential life sustaining needs, such as obtaining medicine or food via safe contact methods such as drive through pharmacy and curbside grocery would be advisable.

COVID-19 symptoms include, but are not limited to, new onset of fever, cough, shortness of breath, congestion or runny nose, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, body aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or unusual fatigue.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have released alternatives for the quarantine period following exposure to COVID-19. Exposure is having close contact (being within six feet of an infected individual for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) to someone who is COVID-19 positive starting from 48 hours before illness onset (or for patients without symptoms, the date of their test result) until the time the patient is isolated.

Portage County Health District has reviewed these guidelines and based on the local testing availability, increased length of time for COVID-19 testing results, and the number of new COVID-19 cases per capita in Portage County, Portage County Health District will adopt the reduced duration of a 10-day Quarantine period without any COVID-19 testing for direct contact individuals who do not have symptoms of COVID-19 except for individuals who are both at high risk for COVID-19 and live in a congregate care setting, which is defined as those living in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, group homes, and jail, will continue the 14-day Quarantine without any COVID-19 testing.

A direct contact of someone with COVID-19 may discontinue Quarantine at the end of 10 days only if the following criteria are met:

- No COVID-19 symptoms have been noted on daily symptom monitoring during the entire Quarantine period.
- The person in Quarantine must continue to monitor their symptoms through the end of the 14th day and strictly adhere to social distancing (staying at least 6 feet from others), avoid gatherings, wear a mask, wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer often, disinfect high-touch surfaces often, and use appropriate hand and cough hygiene.
- Please note: A negative test result does not change the quarantine time frame. If any COVID-19 symptoms develop from the onset of the Quarantine period until 14 days afterwards, immediate self-isolate and contact your healthcare provider. During Quarantine, a person should:
- Stay away from vulnerable or high-risk individuals living in the household.

- Monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms include cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, fever ($\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$), chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting.
- If symptoms start, Portage County Health District strongly encourages COVID-19 testing and follow-up with your primary care provider. If you have chosen to seek out testing, please continue to quarantine until the results of your test are known. Once they are confirmed, further direction from your physician or local health department will be given to you.

People diagnosed with COVID-19 who are having symptoms, as well as those who have tested positive for COVID-19 but are asymptomatic, are instructed to Isolate at home. When isolating at home, people should:

- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Monitor symptoms. Seek medical care immediately if having trouble breathing or not able to manage symptoms comfortably at home.
- Stay in a separate room from other household members and pets. Avoid contact with other members of the household and pets.
- Use a separate bathroom if possible. Wipe down surfaces after each use.
- Clean and sanitize any commonly touched surfaces such as doorknobs, remote controls, etc. often.
- Don't share personal household items such as cups, towels, utensils.
- Wear a mask when around other people living in the household. Individuals who tested positive with COVID-19 may discontinue Isolation and resume normal activities when 10 days have passed since their first date of symptoms, they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medications, AND symptoms have improved. Individuals with COVID-19 who were asymptomatic may discontinue Isolation 10 days from the date of their positive test. Portage County Health District is requesting that persons with confirmed positive results of COVID-19 communicate directly with their own close contacts to notify them of possible exposure to COVID-19.

Residents who are either confirmed positive or a close contact **should not wait** to hear from the health district staff and immediately follow the guidance as described. Information about isolation and quarantine can be found on the website of the Portage County Health District www.portagehealth.net , www.coronavirus.ohio.gov or www.cdc.gov .

Section 6: Employers and Schools

Employers are strongly encouraged to identify and accommodate as many employees as possible to work from home during this time. All businesses and local governments are advised to transition as many transactions and functions as possible to conduct business remotely as opposed to in-person transactions and functions. Public and private K-12 schools are advised to maintain awareness of case numbers both within their district buildings and the general community. Shifts to alternate learning modalities such as hybrid or virtual could become necessary.



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Health Commissioner

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