



Monroe County Health Department
Monroe County, Indiana

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**THE MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH STRONGLY RECOMMENDS
THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS TO PREVENT COVID-19 TRANSMISSION**

Almost 2 years ago, on March 6, 2020, the Governor of Indiana issued an Executive Order which declared a statewide public health emergency as a result of the outbreak of coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States. The state has remained under the public health emergency ever since.

The Monroe County Board of Health met on Thursday, March 3, 2022, at 4:30 p.m. to review and approve recommendations prior to the Health Regulation expiring. After reviewing the current case status, the Board voted to repeal the Regulation, effective Thursday, March 3 at 11:59 PM.

In an effort to continue to provide clear and uniform guidance on the prevention of COVID-19 transmission, the Monroe County Health Officer, Dr. Thomas W. Sharp, and the Board unanimously voted to adopt the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. COVID-19 Vaccination** – The Board strongly recommends staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations. This means completing the initial series and getting a booster dose when eligible. Those who are immunocompromised should get an extra dose as part of their initial series.

Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are not yet vaccinated, please consider doing so. If you are not yet fully vaccinated, get a booster when you are eligible.

Face coverings – Residents should assess the current COVID-19 cases Community Level and their personal comfort and risk level when making a decision on whether to wear a face covering.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) newly released COVID-19 Community Level metrics recommends everyone over age two living in areas with high levels of COVID-19 wear face coverings when in indoor public spaces and advises people living in medium level areas to consider doing so, regardless of vaccine status <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>. This is especially important for those at higher risk for severe outcomes, such as those who are immunocompromised, elderly, unvaccinated or who have underlying health issues.

Per federal order, masks are still required at public transportation hubs and on public transportation by federal law. This includes buses (excluding schools), airplanes, trains, cabs, etc.

2. Follow CDC guidelines for Isolation and Quarantine-

- a. **Isolation** - Stay home when you are ill and get tested. Anyone who is diagnosed with COVID-19 needs to isolate, wear a mask and follow current recommendations. This is true both for unvaccinated individuals and those who are fully vaccinated with breakthrough infection.
- b. **Quarantine** – Individuals who are exposed as close contacts to an infected person should follow current CDC guidance for quarantine for directions and duration and wear a mask when around others.

3. Businesses – The Board strongly recommends that businesses post signs encouraging masks, especially when COVID-19 community levels are high. This will help patrons feel comfortable wearing a mask in their facility if they want or need to, particularly those at high risk for serious infections.

Businesses have the right to require patrons to wear a face covering while in their business. If you are asked to wear a mask, please do so.

4. Schools – K-12 schools should work with the Monroe County Health Department to develop guidelines based on CDC guidance and current, local conditions. Pre-K schools should follow the guidance of the Indiana Family & Social Services Administration (FSSA).

All schools should regularly monitor for outbreaks and changing trends and consult with the Monroe County Health Department regarding CDC guidance and best practices. School systems should carefully consider how to roll out changes in their COVID-19 policies in order to make the transition as smooth as possible for students and staff.

5. Gathering Sizes – Caution is advised with any large, crowded events held without masks, especially when indoors, if distancing is not possible.

6. Air Filtration – Residents and businesses should consider ventilation when planning COVID-19 prevention efforts in order to prevent disease transmission. Increase ventilation of indoor spaces by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning as much as possible and clean HVAC systems regularly.

7. Other Recommended COVID-19 prevention strategies -

- a. If you are at high risk for severe outcomes, talk to your doctor to see if you are a candidate for COVID-19 treatments and other precautions.
- b. Wear a mask if you have symptoms or if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. If you have a positive test, isolate and wear a mask.
- c. Ideally, select respirator type masks, such as a N95. If not able, wear the best fitting mask available.
- d. Develop a plan for getting tested rapidly if needed, with either home tests or access to testing.

- e. Consider utilizing video or telephone conferencing for meetings when space is limited and/or transmission rates are high.
- f. Assess your risk and choose strategies accordingly. The consistent use of layered mitigation strategies can limit the spread of COVID-19. These strategies help support in-person engagement and protect people who are not fully vaccinated.

It is the intent of the Board to provide helpful and uniform health guidance to Monroe County residents in order protect public health in Monroe County. The current health order last updated on October 21, 2021 is repealed and replaced with these recommendations.

The Board would like to thank the residents of Monroe County who have taken actions during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect themselves, their families and others. We recognize and understand that these efforts have not always been easy to do. Please know that they have been appreciated.

Carol Touloukian, M.D.
Chair, Monroe County Board of Health

Dr. Thomas Sharp, M.D.
Health Officer, Monroe County Health Department