

Weekly COVID-19 Newsletter

Shama Faheem, M.D



MICHIGAN CONTINUES TO SEE A SURGE IN COVID-19 CASES

82 of 83 Michigan Counties have reported new COVID-19 cases

As of April 13, 2021

Michigan

Total COVID-19 Confirmed Cases: 756,564

Total COVID-19 Deaths: 16,586

Wayne County:

Total COVID-19 Cases: 135,304

Total COVID-19 Deaths: 4357

7-Day Average of New cases: 7284

Vaccination Dashboard:

First dose given: 356,5157 (35.7%)

Two doses given: 232,4765 (23.3%)

Latest COVID-19 News:

- As of 4/13/2021, CDC and FDA have recommended a pause in the use of the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine in the United States out of an abundance of caution, effective Tuesday, April 13. Of the 6.8 million Janssen COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the United States to date, six cases of a type of blood clot called “cerebral venous sinus thrombosis” (CVST) were seen in combination with low levels of blood platelets (thrombocytopenia). CDC will convene a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) on Wednesday, April 14, to further review these cases and assess their potential significance. FDA will review that analysis as it also investigates these cases.
- Due to increasing case rates and variant spread in Michigan, MDHHS has reinstated a standard 14-day quarantine for close contacts of COVID-19 cases effective April 5, 2021.
- Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity extended the remote work rules by six months -- until Oct. 14. They were scheduled to expire Wednesday (April 14), but MIOSHA issued an extension as COVID-19 cases rise throughout the state.
- Michigan is at a record high for cases and hospitalizations for pediatric population. Statewide, 49 children were hospitalized Monday (4/12/21) with either confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19, according to state data. Among the biggest drivers of coronavirus infections in the state are outbreaks among youth athletes and those associated with K-12 schools. This week, the state reported 312 ongoing or new school outbreaks, which includes infections linked to classrooms, after-school activities and sports.

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- Pfizer/BioNTech, on Friday (4/9/21), has requested FDA permission to allow adolescents age 12 to 15 to receive the vaccination, after a trial of the vaccine in that age group showed it was safe and effective.
- Moderna announced last month that it had kicked off trials of its own COVID-19 vaccine for participants as young as 6 months old. The company has yet to report results from their trial in adolescents, which started in December.

Other Useful Information:

All Michiganders aged 16 years and older are eligible to be vaccinated. Please visit www.Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine for the latest information about vaccination. You can find vaccination site near you by using: <https://vaccinefinder.org/search/>

- Key Things to Know
- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.
- You may have side effects after vaccination, but these are normal.
- It typically takes two weeks after you are fully vaccinated for the body to build protection (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Vaccines will become widely available, in the coming months.
- People who have been fully vaccinated can start to do some things that they had stopped doing because of the pandemic.

Vaccine Hesitancy:

Openness to the vaccine is rising, with 74% of Americans reporting that they're willing to get a COVID-19 vaccine or that they've already received one, according to a Gallup poll published on March 30. That number is up from 65% from December. However, there is still vaccine hesitancy. These are new vaccines and that comes with a reaction and a fear that is very real. There is massive *misinformation* out there which also contributes to the hesitancy. Covid-19 vaccines cannot give someone COVID-19 as the mRNA vaccines do not use the live virus that causes COVID-19. They do not affect or interact with our DNA in any way, mRNA never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA (genetic material) is kept.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a personal choice, however, this choice has social consequences. To support communities as they make the decision, here are 12 facts and insights (shared by Sherita Golden, M.D., M.H.S., chief diversity officer at Johns Hopkins Medicine) that can be helpful:

1. *Getting the COVID-19 vaccine can protect you from getting sick.*

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2. *People of color are especially vulnerable to severe COVID-19. Getting vaccinated can provide protection.*
3. *Getting vaccinated helps others in your community. The more people who receive the coronavirus vaccines, the sooner vulnerable people can feel safe among others.*
4. *More vaccinations mean a chance to return to normal.*
5. *Though the COVID-19 vaccine development was fast, it did not skip steps.*
6. *Diversity in COVID-19 vaccine testing helped assess safety and effectiveness.*
7. *Side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are temporary and do not mean you're sick. After the shots, you might experience a sore arm, a mild fever or body aches, but this doesn't mean you have COVID-19. These symptoms, if they happen at all, are temporary, usually lasting only a day or two. They signal a natural response as your body's immune system learns to recognize and fight the coronavirus.*
8. *Do you have allergies? You can probably still get the COVID-19 vaccine. If you have ever had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine, be sure to discuss that with your doctor, who can evaluate you and assess your risk. However, if you are severely allergic to any of the coronavirus vaccines' ingredients, you should not be vaccinated.*
9. *Here's what we know about pregnancy, breastfeeding and fertility concerns with the COVID-19 vaccines: Pregnant women should discuss a COVID-19 vaccine with their doctors. Although the vaccines have not yet been tested in pregnant women, getting COVID-19 while pregnant can be dangerous, so your doctor can help you decide if the vaccines are appropriate for you. The vaccines are safe for breastfeeding mothers, and do not harm a woman's ability to become pregnant.*
10. *If you've already had COVID-19, getting the vaccine will add extra protection. Current guidelines suggest that anyone previously infected with COVID-19 should be vaccinated. Some people who have been vaccinated after having COVID-19 have observed a strong immune reaction after the first of the two shots with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.*
11. *COVID-19 Vaccines: Time is of the essence. Vaccine hesitancy can affect people of all different backgrounds, ages and ethnicities. Some people are deciding not to get the coronavirus vaccines until more people have had them. But waiting too long to be vaccinated allows the coronavirus to continue spreading in the community, with new variants emerging. Severe COVID-19 can be very dangerous: The sooner you get vaccinated, the sooner you are protected.*
12. *Vaccines can't save lives unless people get vaccinated. By themselves, the COVID-19 vaccines cannot shorten the pandemic. They can only work when communities agree to receive them. And, even if you are vaccinated, you should continue to wear a mask, wash your hands and practice physically distancing until the pandemic is over.*

COVID-19 Testing: Most people are eligible to be tested for COVID-19, even if they don't have symptoms. Look for a testing site using the Testing Site Look Up Tool (<https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirustest>) or call the COVID-19 hotline at 888-535-6136 (press option 2) for help finding a site near you.

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If you are quarantining because you were exposed to the virus, but don't have any symptoms, it is recommended you wait until at least 5 days have passed since your quarantine began before getting tested. However, a negative test result cannot be used to end quarantine early.

Variants of Concern in Michigan:

The virus that causes COVID-19 (called SARS-CoV-2) is known to acquire, on average, one new mutation every two weeks. Currently, there are three variants of concern:

B.1.1.7 is believed to be more contagious, but there has been no indication it affects clinical outcomes or disease severity compared to the SARS-CoV-2 that has been circulating across the U.S. for months. However, a higher rate of transmission would increase the number of people who need clinical care for COVID-19 with the new variant circulating in Michigan. The first case of B.1.1.7 in Michigan was identified January 17, 2021, in Washtenaw County.

B.1.351, the second variant of concern, has been identified in Michigan. Less is known about the variant at this time, but it emerged independent of the B.1.1.7 variant. This variant may also have a higher rate of transmission which would increase the number of people who need clinical care for COVID-19. Currently there is no evidence to suggest that this variant has any impact on disease severity.

P.1 was first detected in Michigan March 31, 2021.

Additional variants are expected to be identified. Visit the CDC's New COVID-19 Variants web page for additional information.

Mental Health Help:

Please call your treatment team, crisis lines or seek emergency help if you are facing a mental health crisis.

A lot of people are feeling anxious, stressed or depressed because of the pandemic – even people who have never worried about their mental health in the past. This is normal and there are other resources to help you as well.

You can call 2-1-1 to find resources in your local community.

- Everyone in Michigan is invited to use the Headspace app – free of charge. This is a mindfulness tool that may help you process what is happening around you.
- For people with existing mental health conditions who need extra support right now, you can call the Certified Peer Support Specialist Warmline. Call 1-888-733-7753 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. daily.
- Help is also available 24/7 for everyone through:
- National Disaster Distress Helpline: Call 1-800-985-5990 or text “TalkWithUs” to 66746
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call 1-800-273-8255 or text “TALK to 741741