Improving the health and wellness of Allegheny County residents

Live Well Allegheny: November 2020 E-Update

This is the latest Live Well Allegheny e-update. It is full of information that will help in making Allegheny County healthy for all. This can also be shared with your own networks. More information is available on our website at: www.livewellallegheny.com including partner resources which are available http://www.livewellallegheny.com/about-us/live-well-allegheny-participants/partner-materials/.

We now have 205 community partners, 68 municipalities, 51 restaurants, 33 workplaces and 18 school districts united in our efforts to make Allegheny County healthy for all!

Also, be sure to like and follow the Allegheny County Health Department on Facebook @AlleghenyCountyHealth and Twitter @healthallegheny to stay up-to-date on all ACHD news

A Letter From Our Director

Hello Live Well Allegheny community,

Allegheny County is entering a critical time in the coronavirus pandemic. With the weather changing, we will be spending more time indoors. And the holidays are a tempting time to gather with friends and family to celebrate.

But we must all take steps to reduce the spread of the virus and keep ourselves and our loved ones safe.

Our case numbers are rising very quickly, and this concerns me. According to national models, if our cases continue to increase, we could have hundreds of people die in the coming months. But they don't have to.

Here is what I'm asking you to do.

First, please stop or sharply curtail your physical interactions with others. This means not hosting parties, even small ones like sleepovers, birthday parties, baby showers, end-of-season sports banquets, and larger ones like weddings. It means not meeting with friends for dinner or having people over to watch the game.

These parties can quickly spread the virus. The Health Department investigated an outbreak associated with a wedding that had about 45 attendees. Although everyone was asymptomatic at the time of the wedding, we have linked 18 cases to that event – from teens to seniors. One was hospitalized and one is pregnant.

Please, if you have parties, keep them outdoors if possible, and if not, limit the size to just a few people all wearing properly fitting masks and stay at least six feet apart. Six feet is more than you might think, and farther apart is better.

Second, please help contain the virus by answering the calls from the Health Department and following the isolation and quarantine recommendations. We have only a few ways to stop this virus, and containment is one that has worked for centuries. Containment means isolating those who are sick and contagious and quarantining close contacts who may have been infected.

Third, get tested if you have symptoms or are a close contact of a case. This map (https://bit.ly/ACTesting-SiteMap) shows testing locations around the county, and we're working to add more.

Fourth, please get your flu shot. The Health Department's flu website (alleghenycounty.us/influenza) includes information about the vaccine, a link to a map showing where you can get a vaccine, and instructions to help community organizations host their own vaccination events.

I know what is happening right now might be scary or overwhelming; however, our experience with this virus over the past eight months has shown us that if we act as a community, we can reverse this unsettling trend.

Thank you. Stay safe, and be kind.

Debra L. Bogen M.D

Flu Shot

The flu vaccine is a safe and reliable way to lower the risk of getting the flu. And, if you do get the flu, the vaccine reduces the risk of serious illness – such as hospitalizations and the need for intensive care. The COVID-19 pandemic makes it even more important for residents to protect themselves by getting vaccinated because:

* Symptoms of seasonal flu and COVID-19 are similar.

* The flu accounts for many fall and winter hospitalizations each year.

* Keeping individuals out of the hospital because of the flu means that hospital staff can focus on patients with COVID-19.

For information about where to get the flu vaccine visit the ACHD web site and the new flu map that is available at this link:

https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Health-Department/Health-Services/Infectious-Disease-Immunization-Program/Influenza-(Flu)-Information.aspx

What's Happening in Public Health: COVID-19

The Health Department wants everyone to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. The department's COVID-19 web page contains information on the virus, its impact in Allegheny County and information, guidance and resources. These materials can help you and your communities stay safe.

Allegheny County is now offering free COVID-19 testing, for ages 3 and up, at a site in McKeesport. This testing is made possible by CARES Act funding that has been allocated directly to the county. For more information about how to make an appointment at this location please call 412-209-2262, or visit this link: http://bit.ly/McKeesportCOVIDTestSite. There is no cost for these tests.

The Health Department's case investigators and contact tracers are working hard to reach people but we need your help. Please pick up the phone when the Health Department is calling, answer our questions and follow our instructions. If you're emailed a case investigation form, please fill it out and send it back.

Case investigation and contact tracing are vital steps to boxing in the virus and containing its spread. Please answer the call.

McKeesport COVID-19 Drive Thru Testing Site

455 INDUSTRY ROAD

**Open 10 am to 4 pm
Monday through Friday**

Pre-register for a next-day appointment online or via phone at 412-209-2262

Registration and testing information available at **alleghenycounty.us/coronavirus**

The Health Department encourages Allegheny County residents to download and use COVID Alert PA, a smartphone app designed to let you know if you've been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. The more people who use the app, the more effective it will be at keeping us safe.

Available now free to smartphone users as a download
from the Apple App store or Google Play store, COVID Alert PA is available in English and Spanish. More information is available here: pa.gov/covid/covid-alert-pa/.