

July 7, 2021

Dear Parents,

Thank you for your cooperation with all of the pandemic protocols you and your students withstood during this past school year. I wish I could say they are all in the past. Unfortunately, while cases of COVID-19 have gone down, the virus is here to stay and still spreading in our community. As of now, those protocols are still recognized as best practices for on-going safety and prevention.

Students who are not vaccinated or are too young to be vaccinated will have no protection against the serious risks of COVID-19. Only about 1 out of 3 (34%) Allen County residents have been vaccinated, and that percentage is even lower among 12- to 18-year-olds. Our community is still at risk for COVID-19 illness and outbreaks.

Contact Tracing, Isolation and Quarantine

Following public health protocols and the recommended best practices will help us prevent additional spread of COVID-19. It is important for parents and students to understand that contact tracing, quarantine, and isolation are still best practices. Based on the current guidelines from the CDC and the Ohio Department of Health, fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine if they are exposed to COVID-19 unless they develop symptoms. Please consider getting your child vaccinated so they can fully participate in family and school activities.

COVID-19 Vaccines

We have scheduled vaccination clinics at several schools to help make it convenient. Please see the attached school vaccination schedule.

Here are some of the common questions and answers about a COVID-19 vaccine:

Q: Will COVID-19 vaccines change someone's DNA?

A: No. COVID-19 vaccines will not alter a person's DNA. The Pfizer vaccine is a messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine. It provides instructions for the body to create the harmless surface or "spike" protein found in the virus that causes COVID-19; the body responds by building antibodies to destroy the protein.

Q: Do COVID-19 vaccines implant people with a tracking microchip?

A: No. Vaccine injections do not contain tracking microchips.

Q: Do COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility, or impact a child's future fertility?

A: No. There is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems.

Q: Should I still get my child vaccinated with the recent news about myocarditis/pericarditis (heart problems) following mRNA COVID-19 vaccination?

A: Yes. The known and potential benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the known and potential risks, including the possible risk of myocarditis or pericarditis. Also, most patients with myocarditis and pericarditis who received care responded well to treatment and rest and quickly felt better.

There is more guidance on the back of this page. If you have further questions about the vaccine, please talk to your healthcare provider or call and talk to one of our public health nurses to get your questions answered.

Your child's health is our priority. Thank you for your help to protect our community and each other.

****Please see next page for additional information****



The following recommendations are best practices for on-going community safety and prevention against COVID-19

Masking

- If you are not fully vaccinated* against COVID-19, consider wearing a mask that covers the nose, mouth, and chin when:
 - In any indoor location that is not a residence.
 - Outdoors, if it is not possible to consistently maintain a distance of 6 feet or more between people who live in different homes/households.
 - Riding, driving, or operating public transportation, or a taxi, car service, or ride sharing vehicle. (This does not apply to members of a household sharing a private or rental vehicle.)
- If you are fully vaccinated,* you may be asked to wear a mask in certain situations, such as when traveling on public transportation.
- Regardless of vaccination status, you may be asked to wear a mask in a healthcare setting.
- A mask should never be worn by/placed on anyone who:
 - Is younger than 2.
 - Cannot remove it without assistance.
 - Risks choking if wearing a mask.
 - Is sleeping/napping.
 - Is swimming. (Wet masks can cause difficulty breathing.)
 - Is living with a medical condition that makes it unsafe to wear a mask. This includes respiratory conditions that restrict breathing, mental health conditions, or disabilities.
 - Risks workplace health, safety, or job duty if wearing a mask.

Congregating, Social Distancing and Sanitizing

- If you are not fully vaccinated:.*
 - Attempt to maintain at least 6 feet of distancing from others.
 - Avoid gathering in groups when possible.
 - If you gather, maintain groups of no more than 10 people, separated from other groups by at least 6 feet.
 - Regularly clean high-touch surfaces.
 - Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer, when entering a facility.
- Consider performing a daily health assessment and stay home if experiencing fever, cough, or other signs of COVID-19

Did you know that more than 177 million people have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine in the United States? Is it time to get your family vaccinated? Check out our website, allencountypublichealth.org, for more COVID information and local links.

Sincerely,



Kathleen A. Luhn, Health Commissioner

** You are fully vaccinated if at least two weeks have passed since you received the second shot of a two-dose vaccine (Moderna, Pfizer) or since you received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson & Johnson).*

