

IREDELL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Iredell County Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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Community Transmission of COVID-19 in Iredell County

It has been a difficult four months since Iredell County Health Department was notified of our first local COVID-19 case. Our community has worked tirelessly to combat the spread of this contagious virus, but despite all efforts, cases continue to rise among our population. Currently, Iredell County's positive rate remains around 10%, up from 6% just a month ago. While our County is testing many more people, an increase in our positive rate is a clear indication there is an overall rise in community spread of COVID-19.

Although some people report merely losing a sense of taste and smell as the worst of his or her COVID-19 experience, we have both health compromised loved ones and friends 65 and older who are at a much higher risk of very severe illness and even death from this virus. An estimated 51.1% of adults in NC are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 based on being 65 or older, having at least one of the underlying health conditions, or both. This is alarming, because over half of the adults in North Carolina could suffer severe complications from COVID-19.

While many exhibit symptoms when infected with COVID-19, there are some individuals who are asymptomatic, meaning they show no symptoms of the virus at all. As the pandemic extends we are learning more about the specific characteristics of this novel strain of coronavirus. Recently, the CDC changed isolation guidance to state that isolation can discontinue 10 days after symptom onset and resolution of fever for at least 24 hours (versus the earlier 72 hours), without the use of fever-reducing medication and improvement of other symptoms for those who are symptomatic, or 10 days after first positive COVID-19 test for asymptomatic individuals. It is also now not recommended that individuals be re-tested for COVID-19 nor be required to produce a negative result in order to discontinue isolation. Retesting is not recommended within 3 months after the date of symptom onset for persons previously diagnosed with symptomatic COVID-19, who remain asymptomatic after recovery. If a previously infected individual is exposed to COVID-19 later than 3 months of their infection, they will be required to quarantine at home for 14 days.

We all want to return to normalcy in our daily lives and enjoy the remaining days of summer as best we can during this restrictive time. Therefore, we encourage our community to continue personal prevention practices such as handwashing, wearing a cloth face covering, maintaining 6 feet of distance, staying home

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Mooresville, NC 28115
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349 N. Center Street
Statesville, NC 28677
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when you are sick, and regularly cleaning and disinfecting. These are all important ways to prevent the virus's spread. COVID-19 is believed to be mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. It is thought that the virus may also spread to hands from contaminated surfaces then to the nose, mouth or eyes, causing infection.

As a reminder, indoor gatherings of more than 10 people and outdoor gatherings in an enclosed environment of more than 25 people are prohibited, with the continuation of Phase 2, by the authority of Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Order 147. The more people an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19. This would be especially true for extended family summer vacations. Since our County is currently experiencing a higher community transmission rate of COVID-19, there is a higher risk of COVID-19 spreading during local gatherings at this time.

Before attending or hosting a final farewell to summer party, please refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Considerations for Events and Gatherings (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>). This document provides great guidance related to reducing the spread of COVID-19, maintaining healthy environments, maintaining healthy operations, and preparing for when someone gets sick.

Iredell County Public Health Officials continue to encourage individuals to protect themselves to help lessen the spread of COVID-19. How to protect yourself and others:

- Practice social distancing, which means avoiding gatherings of more than 10 people and keeping 6 feet or more between yourself and others
- Wear cloth mask or face covering when out in public where you may be around people, like grocery stores or pharmacies. There are exceptions to this requirement related to medical or behavioral conditions. You should still try to practice social distancing even if wearing a cloth face covering.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it in the trash
- Stay home when you're sick
- Keep distance from others who are sick
- Avoid touching your face
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces in common areas like doorknobs, remotes, light switches, tables and handles.

Individuals with general questions about COVID-19 or who need access to support services can call **2-1-1** (or 888-892-1162) for assistance 24 hours a day/7 days a week or Hope 4 NC Helpline at 1-855-587-3463 for mental health support.

Additional information related to COVID-19 can be found at the following resources:

NCDHHS-DPH: www.ncdhhs.gov/covid19

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Iredell County Health Department: <https://nc-iredellcounty.civicplus.com/1383/Coronavirus-COVID-19>

HOPE4NC Helpline: 1-888-892-1162

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