

COVID-19 and Mental Health

Maintaining one's mental health is an essential part of achieving overall well-being. The link below provides resources that will be helpful in connecting individuals with people who can benefit from talking about how they are feeling. There is also information about the virtual support groups and hotlines that are available through various organizations. <https://www.nj211.org/covid-19-and-mental-health>

NEW!! – 988 Suicide and Crisis Line Number Available July 16, 2022

Starting July 16, 2022, New Jerseyans will be able to use **988** to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. **988** will be available for call, text, or chat to those experiencing a mental health-related or suicidal crisis, or those looking to help a loved one through a crisis. **The existing Lifeline number, 1-800-273-8255, will continue to be available.**

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available to persons of all abilities, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). The Division of Developmental Disabilities, and other governmental Departments, have worked with **988** to provide disability specific service information and other available resources. This will equip **988** to meet the presenting need of the caller and, as appropriate, connect them with other appropriate resources depending on their unique needs.

Providers rendering services to persons with IDD and/or TBI are reminded that **988 is distinct from 911**. Under **Danielle's Law P.L. 2003, c.191**, **911 must continue to be called in any situation where a prudent person could reasonably believe a life threatening emergency exists**. More information on Danielle's Law can be found [here](#).

For more information about 988, please visit the **Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline website**. Additionally, a helpful *Frequently Asked Questions* document for persons with IDD can be found [here](#).

COVID-19 Activity

New COVID Cases are Remaining at a High Rate Primarily Because of the Increased Transmissibility of the Omicron Subvariants, but also Because of the Immune Escape Associated with Omicron BA.4 and BA.5.

The rate of transmission in NJ is **1.05**. Any transmission rate above **1.00** is concerning and indicates that each infected person is passing the virus to at least one other person. The higher the number, the greater the risk of viral spread throughout the community. **As of July 14, 2022, Morris County remains at a high level of transmission (Orange) while Passaic County remains at a moderate level of transmission (Yellow).**

For the latest Statewide COVID Activity Report that specifies the Risk Levels by County (usually updated by the State each Friday), please click the following link:

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/covid/>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently updated its guidelines to track COVID-19 risk in communities. Instead of focusing on preventing transmission of the virus, the CDC guidelines aim to minimize severe illness and prevent health care systems from becoming overwhelmed. Taking actions proportionately to increases seen in severe illness and implementing a different set of actions similar to those taken with seasonal influenza is likely as we move into the endemic COVID phase.

The rate of new COVID infections in all of the municipalities within the Pequannock Health Department's jurisdiction remain high.

- The latest COVID outbreaks involve either the **highly contagious BA.2.12.1 subvariant or the BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron subvariants which can more easily evade immunity from vaccination or prior infection.** The BA.2.12.1 subvariant causes a more mild form of COVID-19 as do the prior Omicron subvariants. Most within the population now have some meaningful level of immunity from either past infection or vaccination, which contributes to the more mild nature of the Omicron variant. However, there are some indicators that show the **BA.4 and BA.5** not only have a greater potential of evading immunity than its Omicron predecessors, these subvariants are also more likely to infect lung tissue than the previous Omicron subvariants. As a result, it has the potential to **cause more serious illness.**
- Breakthrough infections among the vaccinated and previously infected demonstrate that the vaccines and/or prior infection may only be marginally protective effective against symptomatic and asymptomatic infection. This is because of waning immunity, but also because immune escape is being demonstrated by the latest variants. It is important to note that **previous infection and vaccination are still highly protective against severe illness, hospitalization, and death.**
- Omicron **BA.2.75** is an emerging subvariant that is spreading in India and data about transmissibility, pathogenicity and immune escape are now being collected.

Please see the **links below for the NJDOH COVID Activity Dashboard, the NJ County COVID Activity Reports and the links to the Morris and Passaic County Health Department COVID Websites.**

NJDOH Dashboard:

https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_dashboard.shtml

Statewide and Regional COVID Activity Report and Risk Level by Region:

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/covid/>

Morris County-Based COVID Information including Data for Total Positive Cases by Municipality and COVID Testing Availability:

<https://health.morriscountynj.gov/coronavirus/>

Use of Masks and Other Important Safety Precautions

Masks

Please see the link below to the CDC recommendation for the use of masks indoor for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals especially when County transmission is **substantial or high.**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

Who Should Wear a Mask?

- People, including children older than 2, should wear a mask in indoor public places if they are:
 - Not fully vaccinated
 - Fully vaccinated and in an area with substantial or high transmission
 - Fully vaccinated and with weakened immune systems
- In general, you do **not** need to wear a mask in outdoor settings.
 - In areas with [high numbers of COVID-19 cases](#), consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with [close contact](#) with others.

Other Important Precautions against both **Influenza** and **COVID-19**:

- Get vaccinated!
- Get boosted!
- Distance six or more feet when possible
- Wear masks/face coverings when appropriate, as described above
- Keep indoor spaces well ventilated to the greatest extent possible
- Practice hand hygiene
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth
- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces
- Stay home when symptomatic
- Get tested when appropriate
- Follow all of the requirements and advisories set forth in the Executive Orders, Executive Directives and Travel Advisories.
- Adhere to isolation and quarantine recommendations
- Strengthen the immune system by:
 - Getting good nutrition. Consult your healthcare provider about supplementing with Vitamin D, Vitamin C, and zinc
 - Getting enough sleep
 - Exercising
 - Maintaining mental health
 - Keeping on schedule with healthcare visits

No vaccines are 100% effective, so people must balance preventive actions to reduce possible transmission and maintain safety. People who have a weakened immune system should discuss whether they should continue precautions with their healthcare provider. The combination of COVID-19 vaccination and [continued precautions to protect yourself and others](#) will offer the best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19.

COVID-19 Testing Options

- **NO-COST COVID TESTING IS NOW AVAILABLE FOR ALL NEW JERSEY RESIDENTS!**
 - [Find a list of free, public testing sites, including pop-up testing sites.](#)

➤ **Morris County**

For more information, please see the Morris County website at <https://www.morriscountynj.gov/Residents/Health/Coronavirus/Get-a-Covid-19-Test>

➤ **Atlantic Health System**

As COVID-19 and the Omicron variant continue to impact our community, **Atlantic Health System** has offered to share important information about how and where to get tested.

To ensure all patients seeking immediate medical care receive the highest level of attention, **Atlantic Health System** is reminding patients with no symptoms or minor symptoms to **refrain from using the emergency department solely as a means to get testing**. Please **do not** use the emergency department at any hospital as a COVID testing facility, **unless you are experiencing severe symptoms or need emergency medical care**. **If you are experiencing severe symptoms, please contact your doctor, dial 911 or visit the emergency department**. If you suspect you've been exposed to COVID-19 or are experiencing mild to moderate symptoms, please consider one of Atlantic Health System's dedicated testing locations or other community

testing sites listed on the following link: <https://www.atlantichealth.org/conditions-treatments/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-testing.html>

Choosing between a COVID-19 PCR or antigen test can be confusing. Atlantic Health has created the attached graphic to help you choose the right test option for you and your family. COVID-19 testing is available for patients with or without symptoms at specific Atlantic Health locations. Find a community lab, testing center or urgent care testing location near you: <https://bit.ly/3uQ9HEI>

➤ **Updated COVID-19 Vaccination and Booster Information**

For the latest information, please click on the following links:

<https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine>

bit.ly/3qC2rfN

➤ **There are Multiple Ways to Get Vaccinated and Boosted. Appointment Based or Walk-up clinics are Now Easily Accessible**

For up-to-date vaccine locations in New Jersey, please visit covid19.nj.gov/finder.

Definition of Close Contact to a COVID Positive Individual

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) has established criteria for what constitutes a “Close Contact” to someone who is a COVID-19 positive individual. It is defined as – **“a total of 15 minutes or more of close contact exposure (6 feet or closer) to an infected person during a 24-hour period”**. Those who have been determined to be a close contact to a COVID -19 positive individual should **quarantine for a minimum period as set forth in the Quarantine and Isolation Protocol Section below.**

In **classroom settings in K through 12 schools**, criteria for what constitutes a “Close Contact” is “a total of 15 minutes or more of close contact exposure (**3 feet or closer if both have well fitted, properly worn masks**) to an infected person during a 24-hour period”. K thru 12 schools have specific guidance unique to those institutions regarding quarantine, isolation and exclusion. The NJDOH guidance and recommendations specific to K thru 12 schools should be consulted. The guidance is available on the COVID-19 Information for Schools website at https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_schools.shtml

Quarantine and Isolation Protocols from the NJDOH and the CDC

For Those Who’ve Tested Positive (Isolation) or Those who’ve been Exposed to Someone Who Tested COVID Positive (Quarantine)

➤ **Quarantine**

Quarantine is a strategy used to prevent transmission of COVID-19 by keeping people who have been in [close contact](#) with someone with COVID-19 apart from others.

Who does not need to quarantine?

If you had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and you are in one of the following groups, you **do not need to quarantine**.

- You are [up to date](#) with your COVID-19 vaccines.
- You had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (meaning you tested positive using a [viral test](#)).

You should wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others for 10 days from the date of your last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0). [Get tested](#) at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19. If you test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms, isolate from other people and follow recommendations in the [Isolation](#) section below. If you tested positive for COVID-19 with a [viral test](#) within the previous 90 days and subsequently recovered and remain without COVID-19 symptoms, you do not need to quarantine or get tested after close contact. You should wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others for 10 days from the date of your last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0).

Who should quarantine?

If you come into close contact with someone with COVID-19, you should quarantine if you are not [up to date](#) on COVID-19 vaccines. This includes people who are not vaccinated.

What to do for quarantine:

- Stay home and away from other people for at least 5 days (day 0 through day 5) after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19. The date of your exposure is considered day 0. Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others at home, if possible.
- For 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19, watch for fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, shortness of breath, or other [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- If you develop symptoms, [get tested](#) immediately and isolate until you receive your test results. If you test positive, follow [isolation](#) recommendations.
- If you do not develop symptoms, [get tested](#) at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
 - If you test negative, you can leave your home, but continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others at home and in public until 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
 - If you test positive, you should isolate for at least 5 days from the date of your positive test (if you do not have symptoms). If you do develop [COVID-19 symptoms](#), isolate for at least 5 days from the date your symptoms began (the date the symptoms started is day 0). Follow recommendations in the [isolation](#) section below.
 - If you are unable to get a test 5 days after last close contact with someone with COVID-19, you can leave your home after day 5 if you have been without [COVID-19 symptoms](#) throughout the 5-day period. Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) for 10 days after your date of last close contact when around others at home and in public.
 - Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If possible, stay away from people you live with, especially people who are at [higher risk](#) for getting very sick from COVID-19, as well as others outside your home throughout the full 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- If you are unable to quarantine, you should wear a [well-fitting mask](#) for 10 days when around others at home and in public.
- If you are unable to wear a mask when around others, you should continue to quarantine for 10 days. Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.

- Do not travel during your 5-day quarantine period. Get tested at least 5 days after your last close contact and make sure your test result is negative and you remain without symptoms before traveling. If you don't get tested, delay travel until 10 days after your last close contact with a person with COVID-19. If you must travel before the 10 days are completed, wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when you are around others for the entire duration of travel during the 10 days. If you are unable to wear a mask, you should not travel during the 10 days.
- Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask, such as restaurants and some gyms, and avoid eating around others at home and at work until after 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19.

After quarantine

- Watch for symptoms until 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- If you have symptoms, isolate immediately and [get tested](#).

➤ Isolation

Isolation is used to separate people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 from those without COVID-19. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. At home, anyone sick or infected should separate from others, or wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when they need to be around others. People in isolation should stay in a specific "sick room" or area and use a separate bathroom if available. Everyone who has presumed or confirmed COVID-19 should stay home and isolate from other people for at least 5 full days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms or the day of the positive viral test for asymptomatic persons). They should wear a mask when around others at home and in public for an additional 5 days. People who are confirmed to have COVID-19 or are showing symptoms of COVID-19 need to isolate regardless of their vaccination status. This includes:

- People who have a [positive viral test](#) for COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they have [symptoms](#).
- People with [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, including people who are awaiting test results or have not been tested. People with symptoms should isolate even if they do not know if they have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19.

What to do for isolation

- Monitor your [symptoms](#). If you have an [emergency warning sign](#) (including trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately.
- Stay in a separate room from other household members, if possible.
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Take steps to [improve ventilation at home](#), if possible.
- Avoid contact with other members of the household and pets.
- Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
- Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when you need to be around other people.

Learn more about [what to do if you are sick](#) and [how to notify your contacts](#).

Ending isolation for people who had COVID-19 and had symptoms

If you had COVID-19 and had [symptoms](#), isolate for at least 5 days. To calculate your 5-day isolation period, day 0 is your first day of symptoms. Day 1 is the first full day after your symptoms developed. You can leave isolation after 5 full days.

- You can end isolation after 5 full days if you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms have improved (Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation).
- You should continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of your 5-day isolation period. If you are unable to wear a mask when around others, you should continue to isolate for a full 10 days. Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If you continue to have fever or your other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of isolation, you should wait to end your isolation until you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms have improved. Continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#). Contact your healthcare provider if you have questions.
- Do not travel during your 5-day isolation period. After you end isolation, avoid travel until a full 10 days after your first day of symptoms. If you must travel on days 6-10, wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when you are around others for the entire duration of travel. If you are unable to wear a mask, you should not travel during the 10 days.
- Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask, such as restaurants and some gyms, and avoid eating around others at home and at work until a full 10 days after your first day of symptoms.

If an individual has access to a test and wants to test, the best approach is to use an [antigen test](#)¹ towards the end of the 5-day isolation period. Collect the test sample only if you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms have improved (loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation). If your test result is positive, you should continue to isolate until day 10. If your test result is negative, you can end isolation, but continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public until day 10. Follow additional recommendations for masking and restricting travel as described above.

Please Note: These recommendations on ending isolation **do not** apply to people with moderate or severe COVID-19 or with weakened immune systems (immunocompromised). See section below for recommendations for when to end isolation for these groups.

Ending isolation for people who tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms

If you test positive for COVID-19 and never develop [symptoms](#), isolate for at least 5 days. Day 0 is the day of your positive viral test (based on the date you were tested) and day 1 is the first full day after the specimen was collected for your positive test. You can leave isolation after 5 full days.

- If you continue to have no symptoms, you can end isolation after at least 5 days.
- You should continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public until day 10 (day 6 through day 10). If you are unable to wear a mask when around others, you should continue to isolate for 10 days. Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If you develop [symptoms](#) after testing positive, your 5-day isolation period should start over. Day 0 is your first day of symptoms. Follow the recommendations above for [ending isolation for people who had COVID-19 and had symptoms](#).
- Do not travel during your 5-day isolation period. After you end isolation, avoid travel until 10 days after the day of your positive test. If you must travel on days 6-10, wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when you are around others for the entire duration of travel. If you are unable to wear a mask, you should not travel during the 10 days after your positive test.
- Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask, such as restaurants and some gyms, and avoid eating around others at home and at work until 10 days after the day of your positive test.

Ending isolation for people who were severely ill with COVID-19 or have a weakened immune system (immunocompromised)

People who are severely ill with COVID-19 (including those who were hospitalized or required intensive care or ventilation support) and people with [compromised immune systems](#) might need to isolate at home longer. They may also require testing with a [viral test](#) to determine when they can be around others. CDC recommends an isolation period of at least 10 and up to 20 days for people who were severely ill with COVID-19 and for [people with weakened immune systems](#). Consult with your healthcare provider about when you can resume being around other people.

People who are immunocompromised should talk to their healthcare provider about the potential for reduced immune responses to COVID-19 vaccines and the need to continue to follow [current prevention measures](#) (including wearing a [well-fitting mask](#), [staying 6 feet apart from others](#) they don't live with, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces) to protect themselves against COVID-19 until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider. Close contacts of immunocompromised people – including household members – should also be encouraged to receive all [recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses](#) to help protect these people.

The NJDOH Communicable Disease Service has also updated **COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools**. This information is available on the COVID-19 Information for Schools website at https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_schools.shtml

Contact Tracing and Disease Investigation

The NJ Department of Health (NJDOH) has provided additional contact tracers to our local Health Department. They support the operation in coordination with the Pequannock Health Department's public health nurses.

School and University Operations While Addressing COVID Outbreaks

K thru 12 schools have specific guidance unique to these institutions and is available on the COVID-19 Information for Schools website at https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_schools.shtml.

Travel

While the NJDOH has lifted its travel advisory for travel, the CDC travel guidelines are still recommended for domestic and international travel.

Travelers and residents returning from any U.S. state or territory beyond the immediate region (New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Delaware) should follow the [recommendations from the CDC](#).

It is **strongly recommended** that international travelers and residents who have returned to the U.S. from foreign countries follow the [recommendations from the CDC](#).

For more CDC/NJDOH Travel Advisory Information please follow the links below:

NJDOH

<https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/travel-and-transportation/are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey>

CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>

Health & Safety Recommendations For Businesses and Workplaces

For safety tips, refer to the [CDC's COVID-19 Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#).

Executive Orders

*Please note, Executive Orders may be issued by the Governor at any time to establish or relax restrictions on certain businesses, social activities and gatherings. For up to date and more complete information, **please refer to the entire contents of the Executive Orders and Executive Directives listed at the links below.***

Please see the link below for all Executive Orders to date:

https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.shtml

Please see the link below for an up to date list of Executive Directives of the NJDOH:

<https://www.state.nj.us/health/legal/covid19/>

Monkeypox in New Jersey

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with monkeypox virus that can affect anyone. The virus can cause flu-like symptoms, swollen lymph nodes, and a rash that often begins on the face and spreads to other parts of the body. Monkeypox does not spread easily to people without close contact. At this time, cases of monkeypox are relatively rare in the United States. People who think they may have been exposed to monkeypox or who have symptoms of monkeypox **should consult with a healthcare provider.**

NJDOH is working in conjunction with CDC and local health departments, to quickly identify monkeypox cases and close contacts, provide treatment and vaccine, and further prevent the spread of disease. CDC is working with state and local health officials to monitor probable and confirmed cases within the country. **Report Confirmed or Suspect Cases Immediately to the [Local Health Department](#).**