



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wolf Administration Warns of Dangers of Not Protecting Against COVID-19

Harrisburg, PA – Department of Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine today warned the commonwealth is on the verge of repeating the pattern that led to widespread community shut-downs in the spring to mitigate COVID-19, urging residents to stop the cycle by wearing a mask and making important choices to reduce exposure.

“At the start of the pandemic, we saw a higher number of cases in people ages 19-49, before it spread to those over age 65,” Dr. Levine said. “This pattern is now repeating. There are things we can do right now to stop this cycle, beginning with wearing a mask, staying at least six feet away from others not in your household, and maintaining healthy habits like washing your hands.”

The number of Pennsylvanians over the age of 65 who are positive for COVID-19 has dropped to about half of the overall cases. The number of Pennsylvanians aged 19-49 with positive cases now account for 45 percent of the total case count.

“Our experience from the beginning of the pandemic shows that first cases rose in younger people, some of whom became very sick, required hospitalization and went on to recover,” Dr. Levine said. “Then COVID-19 spread quickly throughout the community, impacting congregate settings like nursing homes where most of our serious illnesses and deaths have occurred.”

Dr. Levine encouraged residents to make the choice and avoid situations where they could be exposing themselves to COVID-19.

“If you feel uncomfortable with how close people are at the restaurant where you are dining, make the choice to leave,” Dr. Levine said. “If you are in a store where people are not following the mandatory mask order, make the choice to leave. And if you are getting together with people who are bragging that they are not changing their lifestyle at all and refusing to wear a mask, make the choice not to go.”

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Fever
- Cough

- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Chills
- Repeating shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying.

For the latest information for individuals, families, businesses and schools, visit “Responding to COVID-19” on [pa.gov](https://www.pa.gov).

The Wolf Administration stresses the role Pennsylvanians play in helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, not your hands.
- Clean surfaces frequently.
- Stay home to avoid spreading COVID-19, especially if you are unwell.
- If you must go out for a life-sustaining reason, please wear a mask.

Updated Coronavirus Links: Press Releases, State Lab Photos, Graphics

- [Daily COVID-19 Report](#)
- [Press releases regarding coronavirus](#)
- [Latest information on the coronavirus](#)
- [Photos of the state’s lab in Exton](#) (for download and use)
- [Coronavirus and preparedness graphics](#) (located at the bottom of the page)
- [Community preparedness and procedures materials](#)
- [Map with the number of COVID-19 cases](#)

All Pennsylvania residents are encouraged to sign up for AlertPA, a text notification system for health, weather, and other important alerts like COVID-19 updates from commonwealth agencies. Residents can sign up online at www.ready.pa.gov/BelInformed/Signup-For-Alerts.

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