

Health and Wellness: October 2020

Description

COVID-19 technically does not discriminate, but of those who have tested positive, there is a greater percentage of Black people who have to be hospitalized. Blacks make up 13-14 % of the Ohio population, yet 26 % of those testing positive for COVID-19 are Black. Earlier this year, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine formed the Minority Health Strike Force to develop specific recommendations focused on how communities of color are more likely to have underlying health conditions, less access to healthcare, and discrimination when accessing healthcare. These factors make those communities more susceptible to COVID.

The Cincinnati Health Department has been aggressively working with local Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) and businesses to increase testing throughout the city's underserved populations. The health department has also strongly encouraged that during this critical time, everyone should be doing everything possible to protect themselves and others. You are urged to monitor yourself for symptoms if you are in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with Covid19. If tested, self-quarantine after being tested until your test results are returned. Avoid traveling to hot spots in other areas of the country. Avoid mass gatherings. Wash your hands often and avoid touching your face.

While there is no way to ensure zero risk of infection, it is important to understand potential risks and how to adopt different types of prevention measures to protect yourself and to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. As a reminder, if you have COVID-19, have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, it is important to stay home and away from other people. When you can leave home and be around others depends on different factors for different situations. Follow CDC's recommendations for your circumstances.

In general, the more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. Interacting with more people raises your risk. Being in a group with people who are not social distancing or wearing cloth face coverings increases your risk. You have the right to appropriately ask people to put on a mask. Engaging with new people (e.g., those who don't live with you) also raises your risk. Some people have the virus and don't have any symptoms, and it is not yet known the rate with which people without symptoms can transmit the virus to others. How physically close you are to other people who may be infected, the greater your risk of getting sick. Keeping the recommended minimum distance (6ft) from other people is especially important for people who have an increased risk for severe illness. Indoor spaces are more risky than outdoor spaces where it might be harder to keep people apart and where there's less ventilation.

Now that Cincinnati Public Schools is starting a new instructional program in October, it will be more important that we not only follow the guidelines, but that we ensure that our children understand how serious a threat to everyone's health and well being COVID is. Understanding is the landscape for following directions. Our children are our most precious possession. We must make sure that they stay safe and healthy.

Summarized from Health Matters, August 2020

Kimya Moyo, Health Liaison

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Author

northavondale

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