

This Month in Public Health

in Seneca County

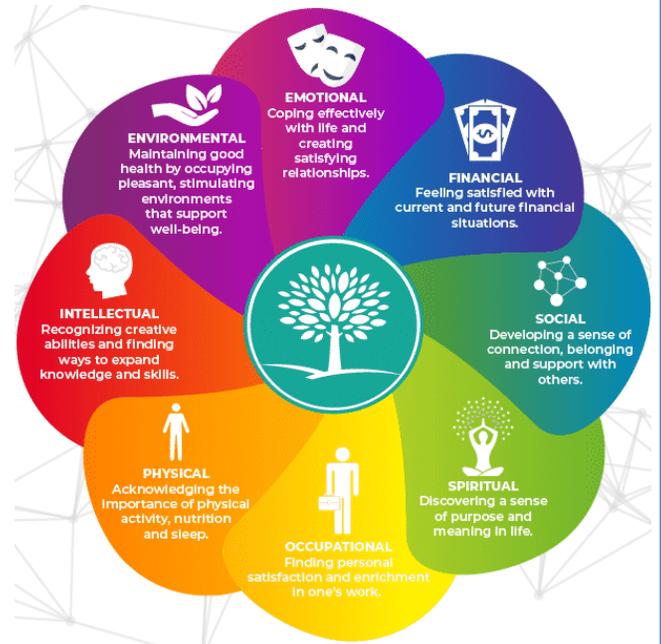
November 23, 2021, Edition

Practicing Wellness

“Wellness” is made up of multiple dimensions: social, physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, occupational, financial, and environmental. Pandemics can disrupt all these aspects of our well-being, because they’re all interconnected.

In the spirit of practicing emotional wellness, I challenge you to write down three things you are grateful for today. Make it a daily habit, to help you see the positive things in your life. Sometimes it will be easy to think of 3 things you’re grateful for. It may be more challenging other days- like when you’ve just hit your 3rd deer this year (like my sister)!

Taking the time to feel gratitude may improve your emotional well-being by helping you cope with stress. Early research suggests that a daily practice of gratitude can affect the body, too. For example, one study found that gratitude was linked to fewer signs of heart disease. Learn more at <https://youtu.be/1TN5ZGL76P8>.



Three Things I'm Grateful for...

1. COVID-19 Vaccines & COVID-19 Antigen Home Tests

November 2020 was the month with the most reported cases in Seneca County (1,439 cases). We had neither vaccines nor easy access to testing, and there was so much we didn't know about this SARS-CoV-2 virus. **Here we are, one year later, with THREE safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and the availability of home tests for COVID-19. These are pretty astounding scientific advancements in just 1 year!**



While mRNA vaccines may be new to the public, researchers have been studying and working with them for decades. Curious how they work? See the infographic on page 3!

There are multiple COVID-19 vaccine providers in Seneca County- Seneca County General Health District; local retail pharmacies like CVS, RiteAid, Kroger's, and WalMart; and medical providers like Tiffin Community Health Center and Community Health Services in Fostoria. Not

all vaccine providers have all types of COVID-19 vaccine, and most require an appointment. Find out more at <https://gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov/>.

FREE Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Antigen Home Tests are available at Seneca County

General Health District, as well as Seneca East and Tiffin-Seneca Public Libraries. It's always a great idea to call ahead to make sure tests are still available. **To make it safe and convenient for the public, we have these tests in a white metal box mounted on the inside of our Perry Street door (limit of 2 per person being tested).**



- **“Proctored” Test** (for those who need to provide formal verification of test results for their school or employer): This test is done at home under the direct visual supervision of a telehealth provider (so a laptop, tablet, or smart phone is required). There is 1 test in a box.
- **A Non-Proctored Version** will become available sometime in December. It's intended for those who DON'T need formal verification of their results. This test is also done at home, but without the assistance of a telehealth provider. There are 2 tests per box.

Before gathering for Thanksgiving with family members that don't live with you, we encourage you to TEST BEFORE YOU GO since COVID-19, allergies, and colds can have very similar symptoms. While no one wants to miss the festivities, it's better not to pass COVID-19 on to extended family that may be at greater risk of severe illness.

2. The 24,435 Seneca County residents who are fully vaccinated

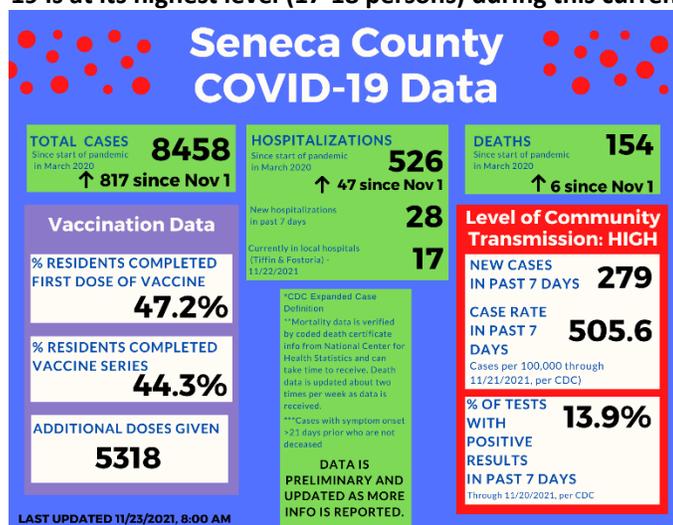
- ✓ Seneca County currently has the 7th highest rate of COVID-19 cases in the entire state of Ohio. If these 24,435 people weren't vaccinated, the number of local cases, hospitalizations, and deaths would be astronomically higher. For example, Wood County has found that fully-vaccinated residents ages 12 years and older were 3½ times LESS likely, and fully-vaccinated residents ages 65 and older were 6 times LESS likely, to get COVID-19 during the current surge.
- ✓ Early clinical trials indicated that the mRNA vaccines were ~95% effective in preventing serious illness from COVID-19, and Ohio data supports this. **Since January 1, 2021, 94.7% of those hospitalized for COVID-19 in Ohio have been unvaccinated; only 5.3% of hospitalized cases were vaccinated individuals. Among COVID-19 deaths in 2021, 95.5% have been unvaccinated individuals; only 4.5% were vaccinated.**
- ✓ **All vaccinated Seneca County residents ages 18 and older are now eligible and encouraged to get a booster dose to offer added protection against serious outcomes from COVID-19 and to maximize ongoing protection against COVID-19 infection.** Those who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine can receive their booster dose 2 months after getting their initial shot, while those vaccinated with Pfizer or Moderna can get a booster 6 months after their second shot. You can choose which vaccine you'd like to receive as a booster.

3. The dedicated public health and healthcare workers in northwest Ohio

COVID-19 is negatively impacting the availability and delivery of health care services right here in Seneca County. Decisions being made by local residents- whether or not to get vaccinated, wear a mask indoors at work, or attend a large gathering like a funeral or wedding- are straining both our public health and hospitals/healthcare systems.



- Currently, **northwest Ohio represents the state's highest region for COVID-19 spread, with more than 742 cases reported per 100,000 residents. (Anything over 100 cases is considered a high rate of transmission.)** Eight (8) of the 10 counties in Ohio with the highest COVID-19 case rates are all located in northwest Ohio, including Seneca County at #7.
- **Emergency rooms in Seneca County and beyond are swamped.** EMS units had to divert sick patients to hospitals outside Seneca County yesterday because our ERs were totally FULL. This doesn't just impact those with possible COVID-19; it also means people injured in motor vehicle accidents or having heart attacks, strokes, asthma attacks, etc., are unable to get the quick, life-saving care they need. It also contributes to ER staff exhaustion and burnout.
- There are 552 COVID-positive patients in northwest Ohio hospitals today; 1 in 5 patients is COVID-positive. Our local hospitals continue to see an ever-increasing number of COVID-19 admissions, with resources becoming more and more taxed. **Bed availability is extremely limited, resulting in emergency room patients or individuals needing to be transferred to another hospital waiting for hours or sometime days to be admitted.**
- **100% of local hospital beds available for airborne (respiratory) isolation are FULL today- meaning, they don't have anywhere to put another infectious COVID-19 patient. The number of Seneca County residents hospitalized with COVID-19 is at its highest level (17-18 persons) during this current surge of the pandemic.**



How can you make a difference? Get vaccinated, wear a mask in indoor public settings, get tested before going to family gatherings or large events, and stay home if you're positive or sick. Do it for those you love and care about!