



KEARNY COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
PREVENT PROMOTE PROTECT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2021

To our Kearny County Community:

This update continues to be filled with good news. We continue to remain at level 1 from a county alert standpoint, and have not had an active COVID-19 case in the county for 12 days and counting right now. COVID-19 is not “over” at this point, as you may have seen or read news from places like India where there are terrible outbreaks and very limited resources with devastating results, but at the moment the virus activity in our community and surrounding region is extremely low. This is in no small part due to widespread vaccine administration and availability. Please call the health department or Lakin Drug to get scheduled for your vaccine if you have not done so already. I have a couple things to review:

1. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine administration in the U.S. has been resumed, and more information is available at this time. The very rare complication noted with the vaccine is related to low platelets and blood clots, and risk for this is highest for women under age 50. For this demographic, it is estimated that the risk of this complication is about 1 in 143,000, which is very low and significantly lower than the risk of any moderate to severe complication if an individual in this demographic were to get COVID-19. However, due to this very small risk, our recommendation at this time is that if you are a woman under age 50, choose to get the Moderna vaccine, of which we have a great supply in the county. For women over age 50 and all men, choose whichever vaccine you wish.
2. I continue to get the question: “Should I still wear a mask once I have had my vaccine.” This question brings much frustration with it most often. The CDC recently released guidelines about what activities vaccinated individuals can safely participate in without a mask, but it is still a very limited list. At some point, further guidance will come from the CDC, but until our risk of an outbreak related to the COVID-19 variants is essentially gone and until we have vaccinated 70-80% of our eligible population, that guidance probably won’t be a direct “take your masks off” recommendation. However, in our community, I think we can consider 3 things:
 1. What is the risk profile of your household? Your risk profile is very low if everyone in the house is vaccinated, and even if the adults are vaccinated and the kids are generally healthy. The risk profile is a little bit higher if someone in the house is severely immunocompromised, or if some adults in the household are not vaccinated. Your risk profile is significantly higher if some adults in the household are not vaccinated and are elderly or have significant other medical illnesses.
 2. What is your tolerance of risk? Risks of COVID-19 infection are much lower with vaccination, but there is a very small risk of infection, and an incredibly minute risk of severe infection, even after obtaining the vaccine.
 3. What is the viral activity level in the community that you are in? As I mentioned above, our county alert level is 1 with no recent active cases. The risk in our county at this time is extremely low. The answer is different if you or your family are traveling to an area of the U.S. with more recent COVID-19 infections, and is definitely different if you are traveling out of the country.

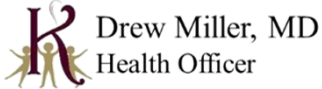
All this to say, if you are vaccinated, consider these 3 things that I have mentioned above and make your decision about wearing a mask. For now, you will probably still be asked to wear a mask in the hospital or a healthcare office. Outside of that, if your risk profile is low, you find that the very small risk of infection is acceptable, and the viral activity in the community is low, feel free to not wear a mask.

Thanks to so many for reading these weekly updates and for your positive feedback. We will be moving to updates every other week, but will move back to weekly updates if the need arises. Again, if you have not yet obtained your COVID-19 vaccine, please call the health department or your health care provider to find out when and where you can obtain the vaccine. Have a blessed week.

Stay healthy,



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