

April 28, 2022

HEALTH ADVISORY: SARATOGA COUNTY COVID-19 COMMUNITY LEVEL

SUMMARY:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed the “[COVID-19 Community Level](#)” framework to help communities and individuals make decisions based on their local context unique needs and the latest data.
- CDC evaluates three metrics (new COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population in the past 7 days, the percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients, and total new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population in the past 7 days) to determine whether a community level is low, medium, or high.
- Today, CDC updated Saratoga County’s COVID-19 Community Level from medium to high.
- CDC and Saratoga County Public Health Services recommend:
 - Individuals wear a well-fitting mask indoors in public, regardless of vaccination status.
 - Individuals who are immunocompromised or high risk for severe disease should
 - Wear a mask or respirator that provides greater protection.
 - Consider avoiding non-essential indoor activities in public where they could be exposed.
 - Talk to their healthcare provider about whether they need to take other precautions, such as testing and whether they are a candidate for treatments like oral antivirals, pre-exposure prophylaxis and monoclonal antibodies.
 - Have a plan for rapid testing if needed.
 - Individuals who have household or social contact with someone at high risk for severe disease should
 - Consider self-testing to detect infection before contact
 - Consider wearing a mask when indoors with them
 - Individuals stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters.
 - Individuals maximize ventilation throughout indoor spaces when possible.
 - Individuals follow [CDC recommendations for isolation and quarantine](#), including getting tested, if they are exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19.

BACKGROUND

More options than ever before are available to prevent COVID-19 from placing strain on communities and healthcare systems. With current high levels of vaccination and high levels of population immunity from both vaccination and infections, the risk of medically significant disease, hospitalization, and death from

COVID-19 is greatly reduced for most people. At the same time, it is known that [some people and communities](#), such as older individuals, people who are immunocompromised, and people with disabilities, are at higher risk for serious illness and face challenging decisions regarding COVID-19.

In addition to protecting those at highest risk of severe outcomes, focusing on reducing medically significant illness and minimizing strain on the healthcare system reflects our current understanding of SARS-CoV-2 infection, immunity from vaccination and infection, and the tools that are available. Vaccines are highly protective against severe disease, and continuing to expand vaccine coverage and ensuring people are [up to date with vaccination](#) is essential to protecting individuals against hospitalizations and deaths.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

CDC looks at the combination of three metrics — new COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population in the past 7 days, the percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients, and total new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population in the past 7 days — to determine the COVID-19 community level. New COVID-19 admissions and the percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied represent the current potential for strain on the health system. Data on new cases acts as an early warning indicator of potential increases in health system strain. Saratoga County’s current COVID-19 community level is [high](#).

Between April 20 and April 26, 754 new cases of COVID-19 among Saratoga County residents were reported to the CDC, resulting in a case rate of 328.02 per 100,000 population. During the same period, 29 new COVID-19 admissions, or 12.8 per 100,000 population were reported.¹ The seven-day average percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients in the region reported was 5.5%.

Additional data is available on the [Saratoga County COVID-19 data dashboard](#) and from the [New York State Department of Health](#).

COVID-19 COMMUNITY MITIGATION TOOLKIT

Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccines available in the U.S. are effective at protecting people from serious illness, hospitalization, and death, especially for those who are boosted. As with vaccines for other diseases, individuals are protected best when they are [up to date](#). CDC recommends that everyone ages 5 years and older get their primary series of COVID-19 vaccine, and everyone ages 12 years and older also receive a booster. Individuals can find a COVID-19 vaccination provider near them by visiting www.vaccines.gov or by calling 800-232-0233. Saratoga County Public Health Services routinely holds vaccination clinics. The dates, times, and locations of which are available at www.saratogacountyny.gov/covid/covid-19-vaccines-and-boosters/ or by calling 518-584-7460 during business hours.

Masking

[Wearing a mask](#) can help to protect both the wearer and those around them from COVID-19. Individuals who choose to wear a mask should wear the most protective mask that fits well and that they will wear consistently. Many pharmacies have partnered with the federal government to distribute a specific type of mask, called a N95, at no-cost. Individuals can locate a participating pharmacy at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/free-masks.html or by calling 800-232-0233. It is

¹ CDC does not distinguish between hospital admissions for COVID and admissions of individuals with COVID, but who were admitted for other reasons.

important to note that before going to a participating pharmacy, individuals should check directly with them for current inventory and availability.

Testing

Testing for the virus that causes COVID-19 disease can help prevent spread to others and can help link an infected individual to treatment. Individuals who have COVID-19 symptoms, who have had known or suspected close contact to COVID-19, or who are planning to or returning from travel should be tested. Individuals can locate a COVID-19 testing provider near them by visiting coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you or by calling 888-364-3065. Additionally, every home in the U.S. is eligible to order two sets of four free at-home tests. Individuals can obtain these free at-home tests at www.covid.gov/tests or by calling 800-232-0233.

Treatment

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) allows healthcare providers to use products to treat patients with COVID-19, including those who are not hospitalized, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) provides recommendations about these treatments and describes what is known about their effectiveness. Treatments work best when they are started as soon as possible after the onset of illness, so it is important for individuals to get tested and talk to their doctor right away.

- Oral antiviral medications that target specific parts of the virus can help reduce its multiplication and spread through the patient's body. People 12 years or older who test positive and are symptomatic can receive oral antiviral medicine within 5 days of having symptoms.
- Monoclonal antibody treatments, given intravenously (IV), can help the immune system recognize and respond more effectively to the virus. People 12 years or older who test positive and are symptomatic can receive monoclonal antibody treatment within 7 days of having symptoms.

There are several pharmacies within Saratoga County that can dispense oral antiviral medications with a prescription from a healthcare provider. Individuals can locate a participating pharmacy by visiting <https://covid-19-test-to-treat-locator-dhhs.hub.arcgis.com>. Similarly, individuals can find a Saratoga County health care facility that administers monoclonal antibody treatment by visiting <https://covid-19-therapeutics-locator-dhhs.hub.arcgis.com>.

Other COVID-19 Preventive Measures

In addition to staying up to date with vaccination, masking, testing and treatment, individuals can take other measures to help protect themselves from COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses, including:

- Avoiding poorly ventilated spaces and crowds
- Washing hands often
- Staying six feet away from others
- Covering coughs and sneezes
- Regularly cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces
- Monitoring their health daily and staying home when sick