

# Knox Public Health

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## Caution still advised; risk level reduced.

Knox County is once again *yellow*.

On Thursday Knox County was downgraded to Yellow Alert Level 1 on the Ohio Public Health Advisory System. Using seven indicators, the alert system tracks the transmission of COVID-19 among Ohio's 88 counties. For the past three weeks, Knox County had been at Orange Alert Level 2. The move from Level 2 to Level 1 means that while there is still active exposure and spread of COVID-19, the rate of spread is not increasing.

Per the state data released on Thursday, Knox County is now below trigger thresholds in six of the seven indicators. Knox County continues to exceed the new cases per capita rate for the previous two weeks, but declined in the 7-day new case average. The county continues to stay below thresholds for new cases in non-congregate settings and cases requiring medical care, including emergency department visits, outpatient visits and hospital admissions. You can see Knox County's indicator data at <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/public-health-advisory-system>. (You will need to type the county name to bring up the current data. The data is based on onset of symptoms and not case counts.)

On Friday, Knox Public Health reported 222 laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19. There are currently 78 active cases with nine individuals hospitalized. The KPH staff is also monitoring an additional 55 close contacts of positive cases.

Confirmed cases in Knox County were relatively low for the first four months after the first case was confirmed in March. However, since July 1, there have been more than 180 new cases, with over a third of those cases due to an outbreak at a long-term care facility. The rapid rise in cases which moved the county's risk level to orange on July 23, was also attributed to increased summertime activities and family-related gatherings.

The change in risk levels does not change much in terms of precautions. Residents are still required to: wear face coverings in public; practice social distancing of at least 6 feet from non-household members; increase caution when interacting with others not practicing social distancing or wearing face covers; avoid traveling to high-risk areas; follow good hygiene standards, including wash hands frequently with soap or use hand sanitizer; avoid touching your face; cover coughs or sneezes (e.g., into a tissue, or elbow); and self-monitor for COVID- 19 symptoms.

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On Wednesday, Governor DeWine updated the list of states on Ohio's travel advisory. The Ohio Department of Health recommends against travel to those states reporting positive testing rates of 15% or higher. The positivity rate is an indicator of how much COVID-19 there is in a community. As of Wednesday, states reporting positive testing rates of 15% or higher included Idaho, Nevada, Texas, Alabama, Arkansas and Florida. If someone must travel to one of the states on the list, ODH is recommending 14 days of self-quarantine after leaving those locations. This advisory is intended for both leisure and business travel, and should be heeded by both Ohioans and out-of-state travelers

Knox Public Health has been working tirelessly with community leaders, businesses and schools to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic since the beginning of the year. State and local officials are continuously monitoring the evolving situation, and strongly encourage all those who want to be tested, to do so. Through monitoring and increased testing, officials identify trends and hot spots that need to be addressed. If you would like to be tested for COVID-19, contact the Knox County COVID-19 Call Line at 740-399-8014 to schedule an appointment. There are no out-of-pocket costs for testing.

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