

Williams County Health District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Williams County Drops to Level 2 (Orange) on the Ohio Public Health Advisory System

The Williams County Health Department released today that Williams County has dropped from level 3 (red) to level 2 (orange) on the Ohio Public Health Advisory System (OPHAS). This is the first time since early November that Williams County has been orange on the state advisory system.

Williams County first moved to red on **November 12, 2020**, meeting four indicators to trigger the change on the state advisory system. While Williams County met only two to three indicators each week since the beginning of December, Williams County's cases per capita remained high. The state requires each county, once it reaches level 3, to drop below high incidence (100 new cases per 100,000 residents in 2 weeks) before it can drop to a lower level on the OPHAS. Today, Williams County dropped below high incidence for the first time **since October of 2020**.

It is Williams County residents' hard work to follow COVID-19 safety recommendations to slow the spread in our community that can be attributed to the drop in advisory levels, cases, and hospitalizations. While fewer cases in the county is a reason to celebrate, Williams County must remain vigilant to further slow the spread of COVID-19 cases in our county. As with all viruses, the COVID-19 virus is evolving to become more infectious as new variants have been identified across the United States and Ohio. As the virus mutates, a new, more dominant strain of COVID-19 can lead to a rise in cases as it appears to spread more easily and quickly than other variants.

To continue Williams County's progress and to further protect residents from COVID-19, it is critical that Williams County residents continue to follow COVID-19 protocols to control the spread. Preventative measures for slowing the spread of COVID-19 will also help prevent the spread of new variants.

- Choose to receive the vaccine when eligible. This is especially important for high risk individuals (older adults and people with medical conditions).
- Wear masks that cover the mouth and nose anytime you are around people who do not live with you.
- Stay at least 6 feet apart from others and avoid crowded spaces as much as possible.
- Ventilate indoor spaces. Increase the total airflow supply to occupied spaces, use HEPA or MERV 13+ filters, and open windows when weather permitting.
- Wash hands often.

On behalf of the WCHD and members of the COVID-19 Defense Team, thank you for wearing masks and following the recommended protocols to protect Williams County families. Don't let your guard down, Williams County. We are in this together.

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