



Jackson County Health Department

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Creating Healthy Communities

Public Health Advisory *Two COVID-19 Variants Found in Jackson County*

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JACKSON COUNTY, MI – The Jackson County Health Department has been working with the community to identify individuals at risk of exposure to the B.1.351 and B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variants. The first Michigan case of the COVID-19 variant B.1.351 was identified in Jackson County by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Bureau of Laboratories on 03/08/2021. On 03/11/2021, the MDHHS notified the Jackson County Health Department that the B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variant has also been found.

Originally detected in September 2020 in the UK, B.1.1.7 has been detected in many countries, including the United States. Evidence from the UK finds that the virus has increased transmissibility (able to spread more efficiently and rapidly). Additionally, there is some evidence that the B.1.1.7 variant is associated with an increased risk of death.

Originally detected in early October 2020 in South Africa, B.1.351 shares some mutations with B.1.1.7. Cases caused by this variant were reported in the United States at the end of January 2021. B.1.351 is believed to be more contagious. Scientists are still evaluating how well the three COVID-19 vaccines work against this variant.

A higher rate of transmission could increase the number of people who need to be hospitalized or who lose their lives to COVID-19 should the new variant begin circulating widely in Michigan.

Viruses constantly change through mutation, and new variants of a virus are expected to occur over time. MDHHS identified the variant in this individual's sample and will continue to conduct whole genome sequencing to quickly identify any variants of interest, including B.1.351.

Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Anyone experiencing one or more of these symptoms should immediately quarantine themselves and contact a medical provider:

- Fever
- Muscle ache
- Coughing
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose or congestion
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Loss of taste or smell

Due to the high risk of the B.1.135 and B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variants, it is recommended that individuals quarantine for a full 14 days after a known exposure. Known close contacts of positive individuals are being contacted and instructed to quarantine for 14 days from their last day of exposure.

Jackson County Health Department Public Health Nurses will continue their investigation into the spread of COVID-19 and may contact you if you are identified as a close contact to those affected by the virus. With evidence of community spread, community mitigation strategies and restrictions are in place to slow the spread of the virus as much as possible. Please take every possible opportunity to practice prevention and social distancing. Vaccination efforts are increasingly important and can serve to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including the spread of COVID-19 variants.

For COVID-19 testing in Jackson County, you can contact the Henry Ford COVID-19 Patient Hotline at (517)205-6100, or the Center for Family Health Hotline at (517)748-5363. Please note, receiving a COVID-19 test after an exposure does not mean that you will not develop symptoms or test positive at a future time within your 14 day period.

At this time, information on the B.1.135 and B.1.1.7 variants, including the variants spread in the state, is limited and changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus).

Please visit www.mijackson.org/hd for our COVID-19 information page to find information on the spread of COVID-19 throughout Jackson County. Our webpage with information on the COVID-19 variants can be found here: <https://www.mijackson.org/2511/COVID-Variants>. If you have questions or concerns related to the virus, you can leave a message with the Jackson County Health Department by calling (517)788-4420. Call 911 if there is an emergency.

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