



LCHD

LAUREL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Serving Our Community Since 1931

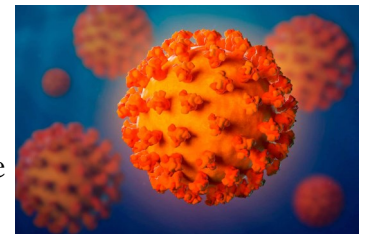


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Late Winter Newsletter 2024

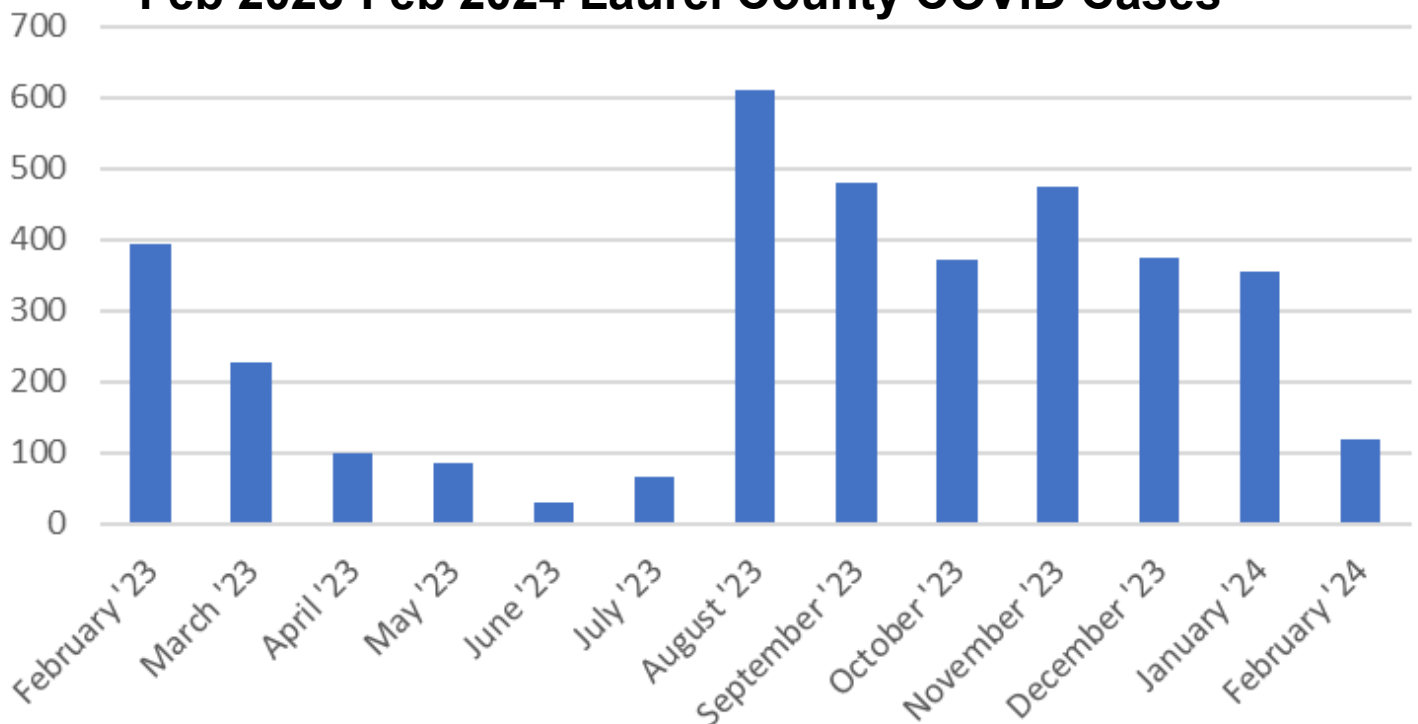
Laurel County COVID-19 Update

Although the public health emergency officially ended in May 2023, LCHD continues to monitor the spread of COVID-19 in the Laurel County community. On February 26th LCHD reported a total of 54 new COVID-19 cases from February 19th to February 23rd. During that same period there were 2 reported hospitalizations. As of October 2023 the total number of confirmed COVID-19 deaths for Laurel County is 268.



Laurel County Health Department continues to offer COVID-19 vaccinations. With the goal to reduce barriers to vaccination, LCHD utilizes same day scheduling for vaccine appointments. With this scheduling, patients can call the morning of the day they would like to receive a vaccine to be placed on the schedule the same day. Currently LCHD offers the Moderna monovalent COVID-19 Vaccine.

Feb 2023-Feb 2024 Laurel County COVID Cases



2023-2024 Respiratory Virus Season

Fall and winter are when viruses that cause respiratory disease usually circulate the most heavily. Influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and COVID-19 are all part of the respiratory virus season. Although respiratory virus activity remains elevated across the country, key measures of respiratory virus activity have been decreasing nationwide (with some areas of the country still seeing increases) for several weeks. According to the CDC, although we have already seen the peak, viruses are continuing to circulate and respiratory virus season is not over. yet. Looking at respiratory virus activity in KY, as of February 22nd respiratory virus activity for influenza and COVID-19 is elevated and increasing and hospitalizations for respiratory illnesses are high. Currently the dominant COVID-19 variant in the United States is JN.1. Regarding the updated monovalent COVID-19 vaccines released in September 2023, in a February 2024 report, CDC indicated people who received the updated vaccines that came out in the fall had 54 percent more protection against a symptomatic case of Covid than people who did not get the shot. The vaccines were formulated to target XBB.1.5, an earlier variant, but they still offer some protection against JN.1.



CDC Weekly Viral Respiratory Illness Snapshot (Reported Friday, February 22, 2024)

Seasonal influenza activity remains elevated nationally with increases in some parts of the country. Nationally, percent positivity for influenza overall remained stable. However, the percent positivity for influenza A decreased slightly and percent positivity for influenza B remained stable. CDC estimates that there have been at least 25 million illnesses, 280,000 hospitalizations, and 17,000 deaths from flu so far this season. The number of weekly flu hospital admissions remained stable compared to last week.

According to the KY Department for Public Health, anyone can get a respiratory virus infection, but some people are at higher risk for serious illness. The Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) recommends the following actions to protect yourself and others:

- 1.) Stay up to date with vaccines
- 2.) Stay home, if sick
- 3.) Wash hands often
- 4.) Cover coughs and sneezes
- 5.) Consider wearing a mask if you are high-risk for serious illness.

American Heart Health Month

February is American Heart Month, a time when all people are encouraged to focus on their cardiovascular health. About 695,000 people in the United States died from heart disease in 2021—that's 1 in every 5 deaths.



Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. The term “heart disease” refers to several types of heart conditions. In the United States, the most common type of heart disease is coronary artery disease (CAD), which can lead to heart attack. You can greatly reduce your risk for heart disease through lifestyle changes and, in some cases, medicine.

Several health conditions, your lifestyle, and your age and family history can increase your risk for heart disease. These are called risk factors. About half of all Americans (47%) have at least 1 of 3 key risk factors for heart disease: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking.

By living a healthy lifestyle, you can help keep your blood pressure and cholesterol levels normal and lower your risk for heart disease and heart attack. Strategies to live a healthy lifestyle include:

Learn your Health History: Know your risks and talk to your family and doctor about your health history. For example: you may need to get your cholesterol levels checked more often than people who do not have a family history of high cholesterol.

Eat a Healthy Diet: Make healthy food choices like more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and low-fat dairy products. Eat less salt, saturated fat, and added sugar.

Move More, Sit Less: Get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week, plus muscle-strengthening activities at least 2 days a week. Get regular physical activity to help you maintain a healthy weight and lower your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.

Take Medicines as Directed: If you take medicine to treat high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes, follow your doctor's instructions carefully. Always ask questions if you don't understand something. Never stop taking your medicine without talking to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

Monitor your Blood Pressure at Home: Self-measured blood pressure monitors are easy and safe to use, and your doctor can show you how to use one if you need help. Nearly 1 in 2 adults has high blood pressure, yet only 1 in 4 has it under control (<130/80 mm Hg). If left uncontrolled, high blood pressure can increase a person's risk for heart disease, stroke, heart failure, kidney disease, pregnancy complications, and cognitive decline later in life.

HANDS Staff Provides “Valentine’s Visit”

On February 9th the Laurel County Health Department classroom was set up for “Valentine Visits” for Laurel County HANDS families. While the Kentucky Health Access Nurturing Development Services (HANDS) program is a home visiting program, one visit each month can be held outside of the home, and HANDS worker for Laurel County, Sarah Lykins, RN, used this event to not only provide visits to 12 families, but also give participants the opportunity to have some Valentine’s Day fun. During the event families made stacking blocks, footprint hearts, and Valentine’s cards. Families were also provided a box of diapers.



LCHD provides HANDS services to families in Laurel County through a cross jurisdictional partnership with Cumberland Valley District Health Department (CVDHD). The main goals of HANDS are healthy pregnancies and birth, healthy child growth and development, safe homes, and self-sufficient families. The HANDS program is a voluntary home visitation program for any new or expectant parents. HANDS supports families as they build healthy, safe environments for the optimal growth and development of children.

Any parent expecting a new baby and residing in Kentucky is eligible to participate in HANDS, families must be enrolled during pregnancy or before a child is 90 days old. HANDS provides support throughout pregnancy and the first two years of the baby’s life. Families meet with a HANDS parent visitor who can answer questions and address concerns about pregnancy or baby’s first years. All families receive information and learn about resources available in the community for new parents. Some families receive further support through home visitation. Contact LCHD if you would like more information about HANDS or early childhood development.



Healthy Living With Diabetes

Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) teaches strategies or self-care behaviors that can help individuals manage, prevent, or delay the onset of diabetes. If you have been diagnosed with pre-diabetes, diabetes, or just want to learn more about prevention of diabetes, you can join our Healthy Living With Diabetes (HLWD) education.

The next Healthy Living with Diabetes 4-week online Zoom series is scheduled to kick off on March 14th. Each of the FREE 2 hour session provides information to improve the quality of life and prevent complications from the disease.

Register today at: diabeteshealthyling2021@gmail.com

Living Well with Diabetes

Living well with diabetes starts with managing blood sugar, and the key to keeping blood sugar in your target range is eating well. Eating well means eating the right amounts of healthy foods (at the right times) to maintain your target range for blood sugar as much as possible. You don't have to tackle healthy eating alone, talk to your dietician, or diabetes educator to put together the best eating plan for your personal tastes and lifestyle. To eat well you may want to consider the following:

- **Diabetes Meal Planning:** Your guide for when, what, and how much to eat to get the nutrition you need while keeping your blood sugar levels in your target range.
- **Grocery Shopping:** Use a shopping list to help you stay focused. Make a shopping list based on your weekly meal plan. Organize your list by store section for quick and easy shopping.
- **Food Labels:** Understanding the Nutrition Facts label on food items can help you make healthier choices. In general, eat more foods that are higher in vitamins, minerals (such as calcium and iron), and fiber. Eat fewer foods that are higher in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium (salt), and avoid trans fat.
- **Carb Counting:** Counting carbohydrates, or carbs—keeping track of the carbs in all your meals, snacks, and drinks—can help you match your activity level and medicines to the food you eat.

When?

March 14th (9AM-11AM)

March 21st (9AM-11AM)

March 28th (9AM-11AM)



Employee Spotlight

Miranda North joined Laurel County Health Department in September of 2022 as a representative of the KY Department for Public Health (DPH). Miranda is a Program Investigative Officer III with KY DPH, KY WIC Program. Miranda is a KY DPH Employee, however, her office is located at LCHD. Before transferring to KY DPH, Miranda worked at the Cabinet of Health and Family Services, Department of Community Based Services. Miranda received her Associate Degree from Hazard Community College, and Bachelor Degree from Morehead State University.

Miranda is the Coordinator for the KY WIC Management Evaluations Monitoring Team and editor for the Kentucky Nutrition Services Branch webpages.



When asked about the most rewarding aspect of her job, Miranda said “I love Public Health! It is truly a blessing to be a part of a program that plays such an instrumental role in improving the lives of thousands.” Miranda’s hobbies are crafting and crocheting. When asked about activities she enjoys outside of work Miranda said “Spending time with family, friends, my cats, watching softball and UK Basketball.” Miranda, thank you for everything you do! We are so glad to have you at LCHD!



Upcoming
EVENTS

March 29th LCHD will be closing at 11:45AM in observance of Good Friday.

May 21st LCHD will be closing at 11:30AM in observance of Election Day

May 27th: LCHD will be closed in observance of Memorial Day

Laurelcohealthdept.org

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