



LIVINGSTON COUNTY
Health Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Livingston County Health Department Identifies COVID-19 Variant Strain

HOWELL, Michigan. - (March 6, 2021) The Livingston County Health Department (LCHD) has identified the first case of the COVID-19 variant B117 in Livingston County. Public exposures are not normally a COVID-19 exposure concern, but the B117 variant is more easily transmitted and could lead to more cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. As a precaution, the Health Department recommends COVID-19 testing for anyone who attended the following locations:

- Michigan Institute of Athletics Gym in Livingston County from February 13th to present (including friends and family members who spent time with individuals having visited this location).
- Grappling Industries BJJ & NOGI Round Robin Tournament that occurred on February 13, 2021 in Detroit, Michigan.

If anyone who attended these locations has symptoms, we recommend that you immediately isolate, undergo testing for COVID-19, and ask anyone who had close contact with you to quarantine for 14 days. LCHD and the Michigan Institute of Athletics are working closely to mitigate further transmission of COVID-19 and identify additional cases.

All residents should be aware of this new variant and limit any possible exposures to COVID-19. This includes not gathering with people outside of your household and limiting more risky behaviors where social distancing and wearing masks cannot be consistently done. Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19, has been recently exposed, or who has recently traveled to a place where a new variant is circulating should be tested.

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“The possibility of additional spread of the variant is a concern,” says Juan Marquez, MD, MPH, Medical Director at LCHD. “At this point, and with the guidance of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, we are encouraging extra precautions. Seek testing if you have symptoms, have recently been exposed to COVID-19, or have recently traveled to a place where the new variant is circulating. And everyone should make sure they are using all COVID-19 precautions consistently. This includes face masks, social distancing, hand cleaning, avoiding crowds or gatherings, and following isolation and quarantine guidance.”

LCHD is working to increase no-cost COVID-19 testing opportunities in the community for those who may have been exposed. More information will be released at a later date. A list of current locations that conduct testing is on the LCHD COVID-19 page under the Frequently Asked Questions section (<https://www.livgov.com/health/ph/Pages/COVID19.aspx>).

Livingston County residents have done a great job following prevention strategies to contain COVID-19 and keep our numbers low. While cases have seen a recent decline in the county, the rate of vaccination against COVID-19 also remains low. Residents are strongly encouraged to use all effective prevention strategies to continue taking safe steps against the prevention of COVID-19.

- Wear a face mask around others
- Keep at least 6 feet apart from others
- Clean hands frequently
- Avoid crowded areas or gatherings
- Ventilate indoor spaces if around others
- Seek testing if ill, exposed, or after travel
- Follow isolation or quarantine guidance if ill, exposed, or waiting on test results
- Get vaccinated when vaccine becomes available to you

For more information and local updates, please visit www.LCHD.org or www.michigan.gov/coronavirus.

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