



## INFORMATION FOR COVID-19 SCHOOL DECISIONS

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The following information is based on population studies and should not apply to any specific individual. It is based on best evidence at this time, but of course, is subject to adjustment as new data becomes available.

1. COVID-19 is primarily a disease of older adults. Children under 10 years of age are much less impacted in that they are less susceptible to contracting, less likely to spread, less susceptible to serious illness, and have a much lower death rate. In fact, even though there is a vaccine for influenza, children of this age have about 10 times the chance of dying from influenza vs. COVID. Of the 130,000 total US COVID deaths reported by the CDC last week, only 31 occurred in children under 15, and 157 in age group 15-24. This is tragic, but less than car accidents. The average age of death in most developed countries is 81 years. 70% of Ohio deaths have occurred in long term care facilities. Age is a more important risk factor than any chronic disease.
2. COVID mostly infects adults caught in tight indoor spaces for more than 15 minutes with an infected individual, especially with neither wearing masks. Based on data from dozens of countries with good contact tracing, there have been very few proven cases of COVID being caught outdoors, but it is sure to occur with prolonged mask-less close contact.
3. COVID is somewhat more contagious than influenza, and the highest contagion occurs during the day before illness onset and the following 4 days. It appears that at least 40% of the spread is coming from asymptomatic individuals. This makes masking especially important. Finland and Ireland published papers recently that included some genetic virus studies. Neither country found one case of children under 10 years old spreading it to their family. There were however, cases of parents giving it to their children.
4. Masks work! It has been known since SARS in 2003 that the mask is always better on the person spreading the virus. Surgical and cloth masks do also help protect the wearer. Plastic face *masks* (like a surgical or cloth mask but made of plastic open at the top) have not been studied and will not be accepted in Logan County. Plastic face *shields* (a plastic barrier that surrounds the face but open at the bottom) do an excellent job of protecting the wearer from becoming infected, but no studies have yet been reported on using shields to prevent the spread to others. Shields make great sense for the protection of teachers while allowing lips to be seen and diction to be clearer. Masks should be added for closer contact. All students 10 and older must wear masks to school.
5. Testing is not as available as we would like. Even the 100% accurate PCR swab test has a 20% false negative rate because of swabbing issues and because the infected do not produce the virus constantly. At this time, we will reserve it for our strike teams when there is an outbreak in schools and other institutions. It is likely that parts of schools may be temporarily closed if we detected a significant outbreak. Antibody test currently are of little value to the individual, and are more for epidemiology studies.
6. The long-proven techniques of public health protection work and are listed in a rough order of importance.

- i. **Stay home if you are sick.** This is of utmost importance.
  - ii. Isolation of the ill, contact tracing, and quarantining of contacts. Currently, an infected individual must be isolated for 10 days and be clear of fever and significant symptoms for 24 hours.
  - iii. Social distancing of at least 6 feet.
  - iv. Wear masks indoors and when social distancing is not possible in any situation.
  - v. Stay outdoors if you can.
  - vi. Wash your hands frequently, keep your hands away from your face, and clean contact surfaces especially doorknobs often.
7. This virus is not going away soon. The world is now a more dangerous place. Everyone must reassess their own risk tolerance. We have to learn to live with COVID-19. We will need to mitigate its impact through smart choices, the public health practices listed above, better treatments and hopefully, effective vaccines.

Great Teaching resource for wearing masks with Bill Nye  
<https://twitter.com/ColumbusGov/status/1281630970542792704>