



St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

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COVID-19 State of Emergency Ends – SLCPH Encourages Residents to Know Their Risk

Canton, NY— Governor Hochul announced Monday the COVID-19 state of emergency would not be extended. The emergency expired September 12th at midnight. Hochul said the state of emergency was an important tool to fight the pandemic such as securing COVID-19 testing kits. She said her team is watching the number of cases, and they have gone down significantly.

What's next? – By now we know the virus is not going away completely, the expectation is that COVID-19 becomes endemic. To be endemic means the virus is found regularly in a particular area or among people. A key difference in endemic conditions is the virus is more manageable with greater population immunity. An example of a current endemic virus is influenza. The CDC recommends that individuals recognize and understand their risk. COVID-19 can affect anyone, and the disease can cause symptoms ranging from mild to severe. We know that certain behaviors may make people more likely to get sick with COVID-19, and we also know that certain settings and activities may increase your risk for contracting COVID-19.

Understanding Your Risk:

Understanding the risk of COVID-19 for yourself and those around you can help you make informed decisions to keep you safe and healthy. If you have risk factors, have a plan in place in case you get sick. Keep your healthcare provider informed and learn extra precautions you can take to protect yourself and others in settings that make you more likely to be exposed to COVID-19. As a reminder, be mindful of the following:

Risk Factors for Getting Very Sick With COVID-19:

- Age (older adults, especially those ages 50 and older are more likely than younger people to get very sick from COVID-19).
- Immunocompromised or weakened immune system.
- Underlying health conditions

Factors that Increase Risk of Transmission:

- Longer exposure time increases the risk of transmission (for example, contact longer than 15 minutes is more likely to result in transmission than 2 minutes of contact).
- Activities like coughing, shouting, singing, or breathing heavily due to exertion increases
- Being around someone who is symptomatic
- Being around people unmasked increases risk of transmission whereas wearing a mask can lower risk of transmission.
- Poorly ventilated rooms indoors
- Being in a crowded setting

Protect Yourself:

There are many ways your actions can help protect you, your household, and your community from severe illness from COVID-19.

- Staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccines
- Handwashing
- Testing if needed
- Staying home when sick
- Avoiding contact who are suspected to have or are confirmed with COVID-19
- Improving Ventilation
- Following guidance if you were exposed

Vaccinate this Fall Season:

To help keep you healthy this fall, Public Health is encouraging all county residents to get their Flu Shot and the Updated Bivalent COVID-19 booster dose as soon as possible.

COVID-19 Bivalent Boosters:

The updated bivalent boosters have been formulated to include components of the original virus as well as components from the Omicron variants. The Omicron variants are what are causing most cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. and are predicted to continue to spread this fall and winter. The updated booster is intended to provide an immune response that is broadly protective against COVID-19, including illness caused by the Omicron variants.

Booster doses continue to be recommended and encouraged for children ages 5-11 years old. The booster dose for this age group remains the same formulation as their previous doses. At this time bivalent boosters are not approved for this age group. The FDA will work quickly to evaluate future data to support authorization of bivalent COVID-19 boosters for additional age groups as they receive them.

Pfizer-BioNTech:

Individuals 12 years and older are eligible for a single booster dose of the bivalent Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, Bivalent if it has been at least 2 months since they have completed their primary series or have received the most recent booster dose with any FDA authorized or approved monovalent COVID-19 vaccine.

Moderna:

Individuals 18 years and older are eligible for a single booster dose of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine, Bivalent if it has been at least 2 months since they have completed their primary series or have received the most recent booster dose with any FDA authorized or approved monovalent COVID-19 vaccine.

St. Lawrence County Public Health will be offering both bivalent boosters to all eligible individuals starting this Friday, September 16th from 8:30am – 3:30pm. Appointments are required for this clinic, to make an appointment please follow the appropriate links or visit our website or call 315-386-2325. Please check with our website or Facebook for when we will be holding additional clinics.

Pfizer Bivalent Booster Registration:

<https://apps2.health.ny.gov/doh2/applinks/cdmspr/2/counties?OpID=E83E9C2FA0C70382E0530A6C7C169656>

Moderna Bivalent Booster Registration:

<https://apps2.health.ny.gov/doh2/applinks/cdmspr/2/counties?OpID=E87DBA72608601F4E0530A6C7C164B04>

Flu Vaccine:

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every year. The composition of the flu vaccines has been updated for this season. Different flu vaccines are recommended for different age groups. The recommended timing of vaccination is similar to last season. For most people, September and October are generally good times to get vaccinated. Ideally, vaccination should be completed before the end of October, however, it's important to know that vaccination after October can still provide protection during peak flu season. To get your flu shot visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) and search for flu vaccines, or call your primary care provider or local pharmacy.

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