

Ongoing Case Growth; Testing & Data; Seasonal Flu Shot  
Health Director Update - September 11, 2020

Good afternoon Durham, I'm Rod Jenkins, Director of the Durham County Department of Public Health. Last week, the state and county moved into Phase 2.5 of the Safer-At-Home Order, loosening certain restrictions that were previously in place. With each of these shifts, it has been easier to forget that COVID-19 is still very much an active and deadly pandemic, and some of you may be giving in to COVID fatigue. First, I will go over some of the real numbers about COVID-19 and why it is important to stay safe. We've also received questions about testing data and where to find more information. I will address this as well as provide updates on a new testing opportunity for children. Finally, I would like to remind you of why getting a flu shot this season may be more important than ever.

First, the longer we're in this pandemic, the more we're tired of it. I understand. Here at the health department, we want it to be over too. Unfortunately, it is not. The bad news is that cases are still being confirmed every day. The good news is that we're seeing slower case growth than in the past. In the past 7 days, we've seen an average of 28 new cases confirmed each day in Durham County. This is much better than averages of 82 we saw in June or even 62 we saw in July. We've seen this progress as a result of dedicated social distancing and mask-wearing. Even an average of just 27 new cases confirmed each day still means nearly 200 Durham residents were diagnosed with COVID-19 in just one week. Clearly, this pandemic is not over. If we give in to COVID fatigue now, we will see these numbers increase again. Acting as if this pandemic is over is a guaranteed way to make it worse.

Continue to practice social distancing, wear your mask, and get tested if necessary. And speaking of testing, we are pleased to share that CVS testing sites will now provide testing for children aged 12 and older. Please remember that COVID-19 testing is only available at select CVS locations, so visit the find my testing place portal on [NCDHHS.gov](https://www.ncdhhs.gov) to find the location closest to you.

Many of you have asked where you can find testing totals, as well as the percentages of tests that have come back positive. This information and more can be found on the NCDHHS COVID-19 data dashboard, at the link shown on screen. It can also be accessed by following the link at the top of our data hub. The state determines what data must be collected and reported by testing sites, and while we receive all *positive* test results, the state mandates that positive *and* negative results be reported to the state health department. As a result, the NCDHHS website is your best source for up-to-date accurate testing totals. But beginning next week, we will use NCDHHS data to share weekly updates of the previous week's testing totals on our data hub. Please continue to use our dashboard for Durham County case totals and demographic

information. We've even made updates to make it easier to view the number of active cases and the number of cases confirmed each day.

And last but not least, I want to remind you that it is critically important to get your flu shot this year. With COVID-19 continuing into the fall, our residents and our healthcare systems cannot afford to suffer the effects of widespread flu on top of the public health emergency we are already experiencing. Getting a flu shot this year not only helps keep you healthy in a time that staying healthy is perhaps more important than ever before in our lifetimes, but it also protects your loved ones and prevents the crippling of our medical professionals and hospitals.

We know you're tired, Durham. We want this to all be over too. The only way to move toward ending it is to make sure we don't give in to COVID-19 fatigue. Stay strong, continue to practice social distancing and wear your mask so we don't make this pandemic worse for our residents. As always, continue to support one another during these difficult times. We can do this, Durham!