



## Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update January 8, 2021



The Department of Health reports 62 new cases of COVID-19 in Westfield from December 18 - 23. Due to the holidays, this data reflects six days of cases instead of the usual seven days we report. We will provide another update early next week that recaps the data for the entire month of December.

The Department of Health reports 137 new cases of COVID-19 in Westfield from January 1 - 7. Of these cases:

- 86 remain under investigation
- 16 had a positive household contact
- 12 had no known exposure
- 10 were associated with a party
- 10 had known exposure
- 1 was exposed a work
- 1 refused to be interviewed
- 1 was hospitalized (age 66)

The ages of these cases ranged from 1 to 99, broken down as follows:

- Age 9 and under: 6 cases
- Age 10-19: 42 cases
- Age 20-29: 13 cases
- Age 30-39: 12 cases
- Age 40-49: 19 cases
- Age 50-59: 25 cases
- Age 60-69: 6 cases
- Age 70-79: 8 cases
- Age 80-89: 2 cases
- Age 90 and above: 4 cases

These numbers reflect the Health Department's COVID numbers, inclusive of rapid tests, as they are a more accurate reflection of community spread than what is being reported by the state reporting system. Details on the official statewide numbers, which do not include rapid tests, can always be found on the NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard.

Regional Health Officer Megan Avallone reports that, like the entire state, Westfield remains in a high level of transmission, and the Westfield Regional Health Department has seen an increase in activity since the holidays. Unfortunately, this week represents the highest number of weekly cases we have seen to date. As indicated in the data, the most highly impacted age group is between 10 and 19, representing 30% of the week's cases.

The State's seven-day average for new confirmed cases is up 21% from a week ago, but down 5% from a month ago during the post-Thanksgiving spike in cases. Although statewide COVID hospitalizations fell for the second straight day following four days of increases, the transmission rate increased to 1.02,

marking the first time in almost three weeks it has risen above the benchmark level of 1. The gradual increase in the transmission rate in recent days indicates the expansion accelerating after dropping in previous weeks.

The positivity rate for tests conducted across New Jersey on Sunday (the most recent day available) was 15.47%. The positivity rate has been at 10% or higher since December 22.

In terms of vaccinations, New Jersey has received 572,250 doses and has administered 155,458 as of Friday morning. The first vaccination mega-sites opened today in Rockaway and Sewell, with four more expected to open in the coming days in Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, and Middlesex Counties. The State Health Commissioner said they also expect to add a network of more than 200 smaller inoculations sites across the state.

Currently, only those who work in health care and those in long term care facilities and other congregant living settings are eligible to be vaccinated in Group 1A, in addition to police and fire professionals, who, on Thursday, became the first people to be eligible in Group 1B.

The Union County vaccination site has begun taking appointments for those currently eligible to be vaccinated and, as more vaccine becomes available, more appointments are expected to open up. If you have questions about vaccinations, we ask that you call the County at 908-518-4307, as they are coordinating the process. There is also additional information on their website at [ucnj.org/covid19/covid-19-vaccination](http://ucnj.org/covid19/covid-19-vaccination).

At this time, the expected timeframe for the general public to begin receiving vaccinations in New Jersey is in April and May. While it's wonderful that this timeframe is finally within sight, we still can't let down our guard over the coming weeks and months of winter and increased indoor activities. Please continue to do your part so that we can keep the community healthy.

Thank you, and have a great weekend!