

July 23, 2023

WEST NILE SEASON IS HERE. THE FIRST CASE IN OUR PRACTICE WAS SEEN 10 WEEKS AGO. USE PROTECTION. IF WE HEAR OF NEW CASES...WILL REPORT TO YOU. NOT CURRENTLY HIGH LEVEL IN TOWN, BUT NOW IS THE TIME.

BY THE TIME WE SEE THE INCREASE WE WILL BE RUNNING BEHIND.... SO BEGIN NOW.

COVID LEVELS ARE LOW BUT PRESENT NATIONALLY. WE CONTINUE TO SEE COVID PRIMARILY IN TRAVELERS AND IN PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT HAVE COVID YET WHO ARE EXPOSED TO RECENT TRAVELERS. CONSIDER BOOSTING AND MASKING DURING TRAVEL.

PLEASE USE MOSQUITO REPELLENT DAILY UNTIL THE END OF SEPTEMBER, OR AT LEAST WHEN IN HIGH EXPOSURE SITUATIONS.

ARIZONA IS THE PRIME USA LOCATION FOR WEST NILE DUE TO HIGH WEST NILE VIRUS LEVELS IN RAPTOR BIRDS WHO ARE IMMUNE TO WEST NILE ILLNESS, BUT NOT IMMUNE TO CARRYING THE VIRUS.

THIS CAN RESULT IN ARIZONA MOSQUITOS WITH PARTICULARLY HIGH VIRUS LEVELS WHEN THEY BITE.

COVID:

THE 4TH COVID BOOSTER IS APPROVED FOR THOSE OVER 65 OR THOSE WHO ARE YOUNGER AND HAVE COMPROMISED IMMUNE SYSTEMS. THIS IS A BIVALENT VACCINE WITH THE ORIGINAL COVID VIRUS & OMICRON VARIANT.

A NEW BOOSTER WILL BE APPROVED IN THE COMING WEEKS. IT WILL CONTAIN THE CURRENT VARIANT XBB.1.5, WHICH IS 99% OF THE COVID IN THE USA.

CONSIDER GETTING AN ADDITIONAL BOOSTER NOW IF:

YOU ARE OVER 65 AND HAVE NOT HAD COVID

YOU ARE AT HIGHER RISK DUE TO ILLNESS/MEDICATION (ANY AGE) AND HAVE NOT HAD COVID.

IF YOU HAVE HAD COVID OVER 4 MONTHS AGO AND WISH TO BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY.

YOU ARE TRAVELING EXTENSIVELY IN THE NEXT 6 MONTHS OR ARE GOING TO LARGE FAMILY EVENTS.

IF YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID AND NOT HAD 5 SHOTS....AND ARE OVER 65...THE DATA IS COMPELLING THAT ADDITIONAL SHOTS WILL KEEP YOU OUT OF THE HOSPITAL. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THIS.

THERE IS LESS VIRUS IN TOWN, BUT STILL WE ARE SEEING ABOUT 5 CASES A WEEK.....IT'S NOT FINISHED WITH US.... ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID YET.

FLU IS ALSO REBOUNDING...THERE ARE INCREASED CASES IN THE VALLEY BY REPORT OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA.

**IF GOOD VENTILATION, OPEN SPACES....NO NEED TO
MASK AS A GENERAL RULE.**

**CONSIDER WEARING A GOOD MASK (KN95 OR N95)
SELECTIVELY AT BUSY INDOOR LOCATIONS TO STAY
HEALTHY ...ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID.**

**LIVE YOUR LIFE AND GO OUT AND ABOUT AS YOU FEEL
COMFORTABLE..... AND YOU SHOULD FEEL
COMFORTABLE DOING SO.**

HOW TO MANAGE AT THIS TIME FOR GATHERINGS:

**PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE COMFORTABLE GETTING
TOGETHER AND THEY SHOULD GET TOGETHER.**

**TO REDUCE RISK....HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO
CONSIDER:**

GET YOUR COVID BOOSTER

**DO NOT ATTEND GATHERINGS IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING
WELL. ASK OTHERS NOT TO ATTEND IF THEY ARE NOT
FEELING WELL.**

**KEEP AIR MOVING IN GATHERING AREAS.
VENTILATION...BY NATURAL MEANS OUTDOORS OR
WITH FANS, CAN BE HELPFUL.**

**WEARING A HIGH-QUALITY MASK AT GATHERINGS IS
GOOD IF YOU ARE TRAVELING AND WISH TO AVOID
INFECTION FOR SUMMER TRAVEL. IT IS IMPERATIVE**

FOR THOSE WITH TRULY REDUCED IMMUNITY...THOSE RECEIVING CHEMOTHERAPY, THOSE WITH SEVERE LUNG DISEASE, AND THOSE RECOVERING FROM RECENT HOSPITALIZATION.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

WEAR N-95 OR KN95 MASKS IN SITUATIONS THAT YOU FEEL ARE HIGHER EXPOSURE IF YOU WISH TO REDUCE YOUR RISK

WHEN GOING OUT TO ACTIVITIES.... SELECT OPTIONS THAT ALLOW FOR BETTER VENTILATION INSIDE, OR CHOOSE OUTSIDE OPTIONS

IF YOU GET SICK YOU NEED TO TEST FOR COVID. CONSIDER COMING INTO THE OFFICE PARKING LOT FOR FLU TESTING AS WELL

**TREATMENT FOR COVID AND FOR FLU IS AVAILABLE AND WORTHWHILE IN MANY INSTANCES.
TREATMENT FOR RSV IS PURELY SYMPTOMATIC.... WE TREAT THE SYMPTOMS AS THERE IS NO ANTIVIRAL FOR RSV**

COVID IS UNDER CONTROL ON A BROAD BASIS RISKS OF COMPLICATIONS ARE LOW FOR THE MULTI-VAXXED

**BOOSTER COVID VACCINATIONS:
THE NEW COVID VACCINE IS BIVALENT.... THIS MEANS IT CONTAINS THE ORIGINAL VACCINE COVERAGE.... PLUS, COVERAGE MORE SPECIFICALLY FOR BA5 FORMS OF COVID.**

GIVEN THE SAFETY OF THE VACCINE, IT IS BEST FOR EVERY ADULT TO CONSIDER THIS BOOSTER...BUT....

I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THE BOOSTER VACCINE IF:

YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID AND ARE OVER 65 YEARS OLD

YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID AND HAVE HEALTH ISSUES THAT MAKE YOU MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO COVID COMPLICATIONS SUCH AS.... EMPHYSEMA, SIGNIFICANT DIABETES, HEART FAILURE, OR ARE ON IMMUNE SUPPRESSING MEDICATION.

IF YOU HAD COVID YOU CAN STILL BENEFIT FROM ANOTHER BOOSTER, BUT IT IS NOT AS ESSENTIAL, AS YOUR PREVIOUS COVID INFECTION DOES HELP BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY THROUGH NATURAL MEANS.

IF YOU HAVE HAD 5 COVID VACCINES, THE 6TH VACCINE IS NOT AS ESSENTIAL, BUT IT WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PROTECTION AND IS WORTH STRONGLY CONSIDERING.

REMEMBER, IF YOU GET COVID WE CAN ALWAYS TREAT YOU WITH PAXLOVID PILLS, THEY ARE EFFECTIVE.

GET YOUR COVID BOOSTER AND GET YOUR FLU BOOSTER

**COVID BOOSTER IS FULLY EFFECTIVE IN 1 WEEK
FLU IS FULLY EFFECTIVE IN 3 WEEKS**

MANY WHO HAVE AVOIDED COVID ARE NOW GETTING INFECTED DESPITE ALL OF THEIR EFFORTS.

PAXLOVID ANTI-VIRAL PILLS ARE WIDELY AVAILABLE.... BUT MOST PEOPLE DO NOT REQUIRE MEDICATION TO TREAT THEIR CASE OF COVID.

PLEASE LIVE LIFE, BEING CAREFUL IN WAYS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE, BUT DO NOT RESTRICT YOUR ACTIVITIES.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION, BUT AT THIS TIME, IN THE USA FOR THE MULTI-VACCINATED, WE HAVE REACHED OUR ENDPOINT.

FOR THE UNVACCINATED.... KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE ROAD.... COVID CONTINUES TO BE AN ISSUE. THE CURRENT VARIANT IS MUCH MILDER, BUT THERE ARE CONCERNS FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT VACCINATED. WE ARE TREATING NEARLY ALL THE UNVACCINATED THAT GET COVID.

IF YOU HAVE SIGNIFICANT RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS, PRESUME THIS IS COVID AND PROTECT OTHERS!!!

PAXLOVID PILLS AVAILABLE FOR ALL BUT ARE ONLY NECESSARY FOR THOSE WITH CHALLENGING SYMPTOMS IN THE FIRST 5 DAYS OR THOSE AT HIGH RISK FOR COMPLICATIONS FROM BREAKTHROUGH COVID.

I RECOMMEND THE BOOSTER GENERALLY, WITH THESE SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

DO GET THE BOOSTER IF:

- YOU HAD 4 SHOTS AND DID WELL WITH THEM, YOU SHOULD DO WELL WITH THE 5TH SHOT.
- IF YOU DID NOT GET BREAKTHROUGH COVID YET.
- THE OLDER YOU ARE THE MORE BENEFICIAL THE 5TH COVID SHOT. FOR 70 AND ABOVE THE SHOT IS DEFINITELY QUITE USEFUL. UNDER THAT AGE IT'S LESS BENEFICIAL AND UP TO YOU PERSONALLY IF YOU WANT THE SHOT.
- DO STAY WITH THE SAME SHOT. IF YOU HAVE BEEN GETTING PFIZER...STAY WITH PFIZER. IF YOU HAVE BEEN GETTING MODERNA...STAY WITH MODERNA.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MASKING WHEN TRAVELLING IS A PERSONAL DECISION.

- DO NOT CONCERN YOURSELF IF OTHERS ARE MASKING. IF YOU WEAR A HIGH-QUALITY MASK YOU ARE INCREASING YOUR PROTECTION AND DECREASING YOUR RISK.
- I DO RECOMMEND WEARING A KN95 OR N95 IN THE AIRPORT TERMINAL WHERE EXPOSURE IS GREATEST.

- ON THE AIRPLANE, WHEN THE ENGINES ARE FULLY ON, THE AIR IS BEING HIGHLY FILTERED AND EXPOSURE IS MUCH LESS. WEARING AN EXCELLENT MASK WILL REDUCE YOUR RISK DURING FLIGHT, BUT IT IS UP TO YOU IF YOU WISH TO USE THE MASK AT THAT TIME.

GUIDELINES IF YOU GET BREAKTHROUGH COVID:

<https://doctordoug.com/2022/01/10/i-have-covidwhat-do-i-do/>

COVID TESTING WITH AT HOME TESTS (ANTIGEN TESTS) ARE GENERALLY ACCURATE AND THEY ARE USEFUL. BUT A NEGATIVE TEST IN THE SETTING OF CLASSIC SYMPTOMS.... IS LIKELY A FALSE RESULT. DO A PCR TEST TO CROSS CHECK OR IF YOU HAVE CLASSIC COVID SYMPTOMS, OR YOU MAY 'HOLD ON ADDITIONAL TESTING' AND PRESUME YOU HAVE COVID AND FOLLOW PRACTICES FOR THOSE WITH COVID.

5 DAYS OF QUARANTINE AND 5 DAYS OF MASKING IS THE PLAN FOR ALL COVID POSITIVE PATIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN VACCINATED.

PAXLOVID (PFIZER PILL FOR COVID) & MOLNUPIRAVIR (MERCK PILL) ARE AVAILABLE BUT RECOMMENDED ONLY FOR THOSE AT PARTICULARLY HIGH RISK OF COMPLICATIONS (IMMUNE SUPPRESSED OR UNVACCINATED).

HOW DO I GET TESTED FOR POSSIBLE ACTIVE COVID INFECTION?

TESTING CAN BE DONE AT LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY OR BY A SELF-TEST FROM YOUR LOCAL PHARMACY.

<https://doctordoug.com/2020/11/22/covid-19-testing-sites/>

YOU MAY PURCHASE A HOME TEST KIT FROM AMAZON OR YOU CAN GET SIMILAR KITS AT WALGREENS OR CVS OR YOUR LOCAL PHARMACY.

I THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE A HOME KIT FOR SELF-TESTING AT HOME. IT IS LIKELY YOU WILL USE IT BY THE END OF WINTER.

RECOMMENDED HOME TEST KITS FROM AMAZON ARE:

- iHealth COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test
- Quidel QuickVue at-Home OTC COVID-19

https://www.amazon.com/iHealth-COVID-19-Authorized-Non-invasive-Discomfort/dp/B09KZ6TBNY/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?crid=1QISNYIENRKEO&keywords=ihealth+covid-19+antigen+rapid+test&qid=1655045654&sprefix=ihealth%2Caps%2C169&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUExNUkwMFdSWlNQTVQwJmVuY3J5cHRIZElkPUEwMzc1MzMzMzBUUjJUSVg4UFA5UyZlbnNyeXBoZWRBZElkPUEwNDQ5MzI4MzNBOTdXUk9TSk5FMiZ3aWRnZXR0YW1lPXNwX2FoZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkbo5vdExvZoNsawNrPXRydWU=

https://www.amazon.com/Quidel-QuickVue-at-Home-COVID-19-Test/dp/B093NBTF75/ref=sr_1_3?crid=25COAA6CR9FBY&dchild=1&keywords=rapid+covid+testing+kit+for+home&qid=1630678185&sprefix=rapid+covid+test%2Caps%2C241&sr=8-3

TESTING LOCATIONS CAN ALSO BE FOUND HERE:

<https://doctordoug.com/2020/11/22/covid-19-testing-sites/>

YOU CAN SEE DAILY TRENDS FOR ARIZONA AND THE U.S. HERE, ON THE CDC WEBSITE...JUST CHOOSE 'ARIZONA' FROM THE LIST.

https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#trends_dailytrends

To monitor the course of COVID in Maricopa County, go to: <https://covidactnow.org>

LOCATIONS FOR COVID TESTING OTHER THAN OUR OFFICE...SEE OUR UPDATED LIST:

<https://doctordoug.com/2020/06/30/covid-19-testing-sites/>

LATE NIGHT TESTING AT NEXT CARE FACILITIES IS A CONSIDERATION. HERE IS THE LINK:

<https://nextcare.com/curbside/>

Know that our office is responding to COVID, and we are here to help. Reach out for assistance if you are not feeling well. We will develop a plan of action for you to move forward.

Yours in good health,

Dr. Lakin