

JULY 24, 2022

COVID IS WIDESPREAD AT THIS TIME. WE CONTINUE TO SEE VERY HIGH CASE LEVELS.

IF YOU HAVE RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS AND A NEGATIVE HOME COVID TEST.... YOU STILL MOST LIKELY HAVE COVID. ISOLATE AND CONTINUE TO RETEST.

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

THE NEW BA-5 VARIANT IS MORE CONTAGIOUS. IT IS NOT MORE SERIOUS. ALL OF OUR PATIENTS ARE DOING WELL. SOME NEED TREATMENT WITH PAXLOVID.... MOST DO NOT.

WE STILL HAVE ZERO HOSPITALIZATIONS AMONG HUNDREDS OF OUR PATIENTS WHO HAVE RECENTLY HAD BREAKTHROUGH COVID.

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

IF SYMPTOMS ARE MILD, THERE IS NO NEED TO TAKE THE PAXLOVID. A GOOD NATURAL IMMUNE RESPONSE IS A STRONG PROTECTOR AND PROVIDES IMPROVED FUTURE PROTECTION FROM INFECTION AS WELL.

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.

BA.5 VARIANTS ARE OVER 75+% OF ISOLATES CURRENTLY IN ARIZONA.

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!!! GET TESTED AND IF PERSISTING SYMPTOMS AND NEGATIVE HOME TEST.... RETEST.

FLU IS ALSO POSSIBLE IF FEELING ILL AND COVID NEGATIVE. CALL TO COME IN FOR FLU TESTING IF NEEDED.

COVID VERY HIGH IN THE PHOENIX COMMUNITY BROADLY. IF YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID NOW IS A TIME WHEN YOU MAY CONTRACT IT. DO NOT WORRY BUT TAKE STEPS IF YOU WANT TO AVOID INFECTION.

BREAKTHROUGH CASES IN ALL TRIPLE & QUADRUPLE VAXXED ARE DOING WELL.

**BREAKTHROUGH CASES IN ALL THOSE PREVIOUSLY
INFECTED ARE ALSO DOING WELL.**

**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.**

**4TH BOOSTER APPROVED FOR OVER 50, AND IT DOES
PROVIDE IMPROVED PROTECTION FOR MILD AND
SEVERE DISEASE, BUT IT IS FINE FOR YOU TO MAKE
YOUR OWN DECISION ON THE 4TH SHOT AS 3 SHOTS
PROVIDE EXCELLENT PROTECTION.**

**I RECOMMEND THE BOOSTER GENERALLY, WITH THESE
SPECIFIC COMMENTS:**

DO GET THE BOOSTER IF:

- YOU HAD 3 SHOTS AND DID WELL WITH THEM, YOU SHOULD DO WELL WITH THE 4TH SHOT.
- IF YOU DID NOT GET BREAKTHROUGH COVID YET.
- THE OLDER YOU ARE THE MORE BENEFICIAL THE 4TH 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.**

ARIZONA COVID LEVELS ARE THE LOWEST IN ARIZONA SINCE THE 'QUIET TIMES' OF SPRING/SUMMER 2021, BUT SOME EVIDENCE OF A RISE AT THIS TIME.

OTHER SUBVARIANTS ARE DEVELOPING AND ARE NOT ANY MORE DANGEROUS OR CONTAGIOUS. THIS IS GOOD NEWS.

ARIZONA MAY BENEFIT FROM HIGH RATES OF NATURAL INFECTION WITH THE PAST THREE SURGES. ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT KNOW FOR SURE, THIS SHOULD BE TO OUR BENEFIT IN ARIZONA.

DESPITE CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE BA4 AND BA5 SURGES, THERE IS NO MORE FEAR FOR THE FULLY

VACCINATED.... IT IS TIME TO GET OUT AND ABOUT AND TO LIVE LIFE NORMALLY.

IF WE SEE ANOTHER SURGE, THE APPROACH WILL BE:

- 1. DO NOT WORRY. TRIPLE VAXXED & PREVIOUSLY INFECTED WILL DO WELL.**
- 2. GOOD MASKING WILL BE HELPFUL TO AVOID INFECTION. ALTHOUGH MASKING IS 'ELECTIVE' FOR THE VACCINATED RIGHT NOW.**
- 3. IF YOU USE A MASK, IT IS ONLY EFFECTIVE IF IT IS KN95 OF N95.**
- 4. PAXLOVID, THE PILL FROM PFIZER, IS READILY AVAILABLE AND WE MAY NEED TO USE IT MORE FREQUENTLY WITH THE NEXT SURGE DUE TO WANING IMMUNITY, BUT AT THE PRESENT TIME, WE DO NOT HAVE DATA ON THIS AND STILL, CONFIDENCE IS HIGH WITH THE DOUBLE/TRIPLE VAXXED, OR PREVIOUSLY INFECTED.**
- 5. IF YOU HAVE ONLY TWO VACCINATIONS, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET YOUR BOOSTER. OVERALL, USA RATES OF TRIPLE VACCINATION ARE 65%.... WE MUST DO BETTER!**

WE CONTINUE TO SEE A MODEST NUMBER OF BREAKTHROUGH CASES...THEY ARE BECOMING SLIGHTLY MORE FREQUENT. VIRTUALLY ALL FULLY VACCINATED PATIENTS DO WELL WITH OMICRON & DO NOT REQUIRE ANTI-COVID MEDICATIONS.

COVID TESTING FOR SYMPTOMS IS APPROPRIATE...PLEASE CONTINUE TO DO TESTING IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS OF CONCERN.

GUIDELINES IF YOU GET BREAKTHROUGH COVID:

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

100% OF OUR VACCINATED PATIENTS HAVE DONE WELL WITH ZERO HOSPITALIZATIONS.

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). COVID PILLS ARE NOT NECESSARY FOR THE TRIPLE VACCINATED/DOUBLE VACCINATED.

IF YOU HAVE MILD OR QUESTIONABLE SYMPTOMS OR EXPOSURE AND YOUR TEST IS NEGATIVE, IT IS LIKELY ACCURATE.... BUT, IF YOU HAVE SIGNIFICANT

RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS/FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS AND YOUR HOME TESTING IS NEGATIVE, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS IS A FALSE FINDING.

IN THE SETTING OF CLASSIC SYMPTOMS, SUCH TEST RESULTS ARE SUSPECT AS THE CURRENT ANTIGEN TESTING HAS BEEN MISSING SOME OMICRON INFECTIONS.

IF THIS IS THE CASE ARRANGE FOR PCR TESTING OR BE IN TOUCH AND WE WILL HELP YOU ARRANGE.

DO NOT ASSUME YOU ARE COVID FREE IF SYMPTOMS APPEAR STRONGLY TO SUGGEST COVID & ANTIGEN TESTING IS NEGATIVE...GET RETESTED WITH A TOP LEVEL TEST (PCR).

THIRD VACCINATION FOR THOSE WITH PREVIOUS COVID AND 2 VACCINES:

IF YOU HAVE DECIDED TO 'HOLD' ON THIRD VACCINATION AS YOU ALREADY HAD COVID BEFORE, IT IS TIME TO RECONSIDER THIS APPROACH AND TO GET THE THIRD VACCINE. YOU REMAIN STRONGLY PROTECTED WITH COVID + 2 VACCINES, BUT IF YOU DID NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE REACTION TO THE VACCINE THEN THE THIRD SHOT IS RECOMMENDED.

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=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEwNUkwMFdSWINQTVQwJmVuY3J5cHRIZElkPUEwMzc1MzMzMzBUUjJUSVg4UFA5UyZlbnNyeXB0ZWRBZElkPUEwNDQ5MzI4MzNBOTdXUk9TSk5FMiZ3aWRnZXR0YW1lPwX2FoZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkbo5vdExvZ0Ns aWNRpXRydWU=

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