

Greetings Rockdale Family and Community Partners,

We hope that everyone is staying safe. We have updated the numbers and information in this newsletter to show the gravity of the stress that the Covid-19, Omicron variant has put on our community this winter. Please read carefully as summaries of school guidance, quarantine, and isolation guideline have been provided. Please note that due to a high increase in case numbers and lack of rapid tests, some previous data is not available.

Summary of Updates

- County Overview: Covid-19 area category – High
 - a. Site Location and vaccine appointments
 - b. Vaccines are available for 5 –11-year old's
- Covid-19 Updates
- Other information and new updates
 - a. CDC school guidance
 - b. Quarantine and isolation updates
 - c. Springfield Baptist Church drive-thru COVID-19 testing site NOW OPEN

Rockdale County Covid-19 Overview

As of late Covid-19 numbers are still indicative of Rockdale County being a **High** area per the Georgia Department of Public Health and the CDC.

Please see below for vaccine and testing updates, and encourage all staff, department, family, and friends to be aware of solid hygiene and mask habits and the importance of getting vaccinated. As a reminder, here are a few ways you can protect yourself and your family:

- Get Vaccinated!
- In high and substantial transmission areas, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask indoors!
- Remember to stay 6 feet away from people and avoid crowds and poorly ventilated areas!

Visit the COVID dashboard [here](#) to see the latest COVID stats for GA and Rockdale.

Sites for locating/booking Vaccination Appointments:

Private provider via <https://vaccinefinder.org/>

Text 'Vax' to 1-844-554-4024

Links to scheduling options are available on DPH's vaccine [website](#).

DPH hotline for individuals with questions or those that need assistance scheduling an appointment - Public Health Vaccine Scheduling Resource Line 888-457-0186. If you know of individuals who cannot schedule online, please refer them to this call center. A representative will make an appointment for them.

All local Public Health Departments and open GNR Health Department clinic sites (Lawrenceville, Norcross, Covington, and Conyers) will be providing vaccines on a walk-in basis. These departments can also provide you with vaccine cards if you did not receive one during your vaccination(s).

DPH/Mako Test Sites is a partnership between DPH and Mako Medical to offer **free** COVID-19 testing events across Georgia. The site for Rockdale County is Springfield Baptist Church. (See below)

The Springfield Baptist Church drive-thru COVID-19 testing site is open again, operational from 9 am to 5 pm, Tuesday to Friday, and every other Saturday. please register for testing below: <https://mako.exchange/scheduler/registration/?location=5991>

Please feel free to reach out with any additional questions or concerns.

Thank you

Reminder: the vaccine is available for 5–11-year old's

You can **Walk-in or schedule an appointment** at a public or private site throughout GA. The vaccine is available with no appointment at all GNR mass vaccination sites and open GNR Health Department clinic sites (Lawrenceville, Norcross, Covington, and Conyers). Vaccines for 5–11-year-olds continue to be available at GNR health centers only.

CDC recommends everyone ages 5 years and older get a COVID-19 vaccine to help protect against COVID-19.

Authorized For	Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna	J&J / Janssen
4 years and under	No	No	No
5-11 years old	Yes	No	No
12-17 years old	Yes	No	No
18 years and older	Yes	Yes	*

*Everyone ages 18 years and older should get a booster dose of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) at least 2 months after receiving the Johnson & Johnson's Janssen (J&J/Janssen) vaccine [in most situations](#).

Widespread vaccination for COVID-19 is a critical tool to best protect everyone from COVID-19 and COVID-19 related complications. Children and teens who are [fully vaccinated can safely resume many activities](#) that they did prior to the pandemic.

Everyone ages 16 years and older can get a COVID-19 booster shot. Learn more about [booster shots](#).

COVID-19 Data

Rockdale is currently categorized in the **High transmission** category.

Rockdale has had **15,726** (this number now contains the Antigen tests) total report/tested cases and **268** deaths to date (**01/12/2022**).

The 7-day positivity rate for Rockdale is **37.5%** (This is a huge increase from last reported number of 5.5%)

The 14-day positivity rate for Rockdale is **40.5%**. There is a huge increase from last recorded number of **4.5%**. This number needs to consistently stay below 10% for us to see long term relief.

The 14-day case rate is **2,446/100K** (confirmed PCR tests).

2-week Age specific laboratory case rates were increasing in all age categories. **They were highest in the 18-22-year-old age group** (3,544 per 100,000 – PCR + antigen).

14-day rate is high in all age categories.

As of **01/12/2022**, Rockdale Medical Center is operating at **moderately high** capacity overall, with 50% ventilators available.

Based on current reporting for the COVID-19 vaccine:

56% of the eligible population in Rockdale has at least one dose.

51% of the eligible population in Rockdale is fully vaccinated.

(These numbers now include those 5 years of age and older as eligible)

Please make your staff, department, family, and friends aware that now is not the time to become complacent in our efforts to combat this virus. As schools, businesses, and churches continue to reopen completely, it will be effortless to fall out of our good hygiene habits to combat COVID. So, keep up the efforts and get vaccinated!

Other Information and New Updates!

Updated COVID-19 Guidance for GA School Settings

Critical Infrastructure

On Thursday, the Governor's office sent a letter out to school leaders regarding the pandemic. The letter reiterates the DPH Administrative order, which specifies that educators and education staff, like critical infrastructure, may continue to work while under quarantine – regardless of vaccination status or point of exposure. Please keep in mind that just like all critical infrastructure, exposed educators need to be masked for the full quarantine period (now 10 days) and monitor themselves for illness. Outside of work, critical infrastructure (including educators) need to follow quarantine guidance as normal (quarantine from others for 5 days, mask for additional 5).

As always, if anyone develops COVID-like symptoms during their quarantine period, they should isolate immediately and get tested. Any individual, who tests positive for COVID needs to isolate in accordance with the current administrative order. These individuals cannot work/attend school or other activities while on isolation.

Contact Tracing in Schools

The letter also addressed contact tracing in K-12 schools. While contract tracing is still recommended as a best practice, the letter states that contact tracing in school settings is now optional. We know that isolation and quarantine measures are very important in limiting the spread of COVID. Identifying close contacts is still a great tool, and best practice, but again, is no longer required. Reporting cases is still required across the state. Please continue to use our school case reporting form (attached to the email Alana sent last Friday, also sent in the EP updates).

CDC K-12 Schools Guidance (Jan 6th)

Some of the key takeaways include:

- Safely returning to in-person is a priority
- Vaccination is a leading public health prevention strategy
- CDC continues to recommend universal masking by all students, staff, teachers, visitors (>=2 years old)
- CDC's new isolation/ quarantine guidance (5 days, 5 days masked)
- Maintain at least 3 feet between students in a CR settings
- Layered prevention strategy (masking, handwashing, staying home while sick, etc.)

Review of the Guidance

- **Definition of Quarantine**
 - When someone stays away from others after being exposed to COVID-19.
 - Quarantine for 5 days from last exposure (last exposure = day 0)
 - Mask for an additional 5 days (for a total of 10 days since start of quarantine)
 - If you can't mask, you should quarantine for 10 days
- **Yes Quarantine**
 - Those 18 + who are eligible for a booster but haven't received one
 - Those < 18 who are not fully vaccinated
 - (Unless they've recovered from COVID within the last 90 days)
- **No Quarantine**
 - Those < 18 who are fully vaccinated (regardless of booster)
 - Those 18 + who are fully vaccinated and boosted once eligible
 - (Recovered from COVID within the last 90 days)
- **Definition of Isolation**
 - When someone stays away from others after testing positive (or being presumed to be positive, based on exposure + symptoms + no test)
 - Stay away from others for 5 days from test date or symptom onset (day 0) + at least 24 hours fever free with symptom improvement
 - Mask for an additional 5 days (for a total of 10 days since start of isolation)
 - If you can't mask, you should isolation for 10 days
 - (Unless they've recovered from COVID within the last 90 days)
- **Yes Isolation**
 - Everyone who tests positive for COVID
 - Everyone who is exposed to someone with COVID + develops symptoms + does not get tested
 - (Unless they've recovered from COVID within the last 90 days)
- **No Isolation**
 - Anyone who recovered from COVID within the last 90 days (unless new exposure & development of symptoms)
 - Those who are sick, but have no known exposures, and are negative by viral test. These individuals should follow our too sick for school guidance.
- **Booster Eligibility**
 - 5 months for Pfizer & Moderna, 2 months for J&J
- **Definition of Fully Vaccinated**
 - 2 weeks after completing entire vaccine series

Masks

You may have seen in the news that the CDC is considering updating its mask guidance to recommend that people use N95s or KN95s. This is not something that has been released officially at this time. Please continue to use well-fitting surgical masks if you can. If you can't access surgical masks, know that some protection is better than none. There was a lit review of 72 studies that looked at how different public health measures impacted the spread of COVID-19. They found that masks reduced COVID infection by 53%.

It is important to ensure you are covering your nose and mouth consistently. Avoid hand to face movement when in public and wash hands before putting masks on & after removing it.