



**Benzie County Office**  
6051 Frankfort Hwy, Ste 100  
Benzonia, MI 49616

Phone: 231-882-4409  
Fax: 231-882-0143

[www.bldhd.org](http://www.bldhd.org)

**Leelanau County Office**  
7401 E. Duck Lake Rd  
Lake Leelanau, MI 49653

Phone: 231-256-0200  
Fax: 231-882-0143

## PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

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**For Immediate Release**

**October 28, 2021**

### Health Department urges flu vaccine amid COVID outbreak

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is urging everyone to get their flu vaccine as soon as possible to protect themselves and their communities from flu especially while continuing to battle COVID-19.

Getting a flu vaccine is critical this season because flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will likely be spreading simultaneously. Importantly, residents can get their COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as their flu vaccine. [According to the CDC](#), those who are at higher risk for contracting flu are also at a higher risk for contracting COVID-19. Vaccinations for both COVID-19 and the flu are safe, effective strategies to protect ourselves and our communities from illness.

“I encourage everyone to get their flu shot as soon as possible,” said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director for the Health Department. “Everyone six months and older is recommended to receive the flu vaccination with few exceptions. A good guide to what parents need to know about the flu is available through [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org),” he said, suggesting now is the time to get the flu shot. “And you can safely get the COVID-19 vaccination, or other needed immunizations, at the same time,” Dr. Meyerson added.

Flu vaccines are available now at the health department, physician offices, and pharmacies around the region and state.

The flu vaccine is the best way to reduce risk from the seasonal flu and its potential serious complications. Each year flu vaccination [reduces the burden of influenza](#) significantly in the United States preventing millions of illnesses and thousands of hospitalizations and deaths.

Last flu season, approximately 3.5 million people in Michigan received a flu vaccine as reported to the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR). The state has set a goal of vaccinating a total of 4 million Michiganders for the 2021-2022 flu season.

Last year’s flu season was unique in many ways, resulting in historically low flu activity for the entire season. Public health professionals indicate that community mitigation measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic such as masking and social distancing and influenza vaccination could have contributed to the below average amount of influenza cases last season.

However, during a typical flu season like the 2019-2020 flu season, the nation recorded [39 to 56 million estimated cases of the flu](#), 18 to 26 million medical visits due to the flu, and nearly half a million flu hospitalizations. Despite its comparison to the common cold, the flu is a very serious and potentially deadly disease, especially for children, older people, and people with chronic health conditions.

Vaccination is our most powerful tool. The health department offers convenient COVID-19 vaccination clinics for all area residents and visitors 12 and older by appointment ahead of time. Parent consent is required for minors. Anyone may call the Michigan COVID-19 hotline at 888-535-6136 if they have questions or are not able to find a time or date that works for them and/or their child. Clinics offer clients a choice of Pfizer, Moderna, or J&J’s Janssen unless otherwise noted. Upcoming clinics for appointments only include:

**Tuesday, November 2nd**

- VFW Post 7731, 7475 E Duck Lake Rd, Lake Leelanau, MI 49653
- Time: 1:00-5:00pm
- Vaccine: Moderna, Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

**Wednesday, November 3rd**

- Crystal Cafe, 1681 Benzie Hwy, Benzonia, MI 49616
- Time: 1:00- 5:00pm
- Vaccine: Moderna, Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

**COVID-19 Testing**

The health department is offering free COVID-19 testing with the support of HONU lab. The test is free, and no doctor's order is required. Pre-registration is not required, but it is recommended to reduce time spent at the testing clinic, and walk-ins are welcome. Testing is available:

- On Monday and Thursday from 10 - 3pm at the VFW Post 7731. To register visit: <https://honumg.info/VFWHall>
- On Tuesday and Friday, from 10 am – 3pm at the Crystal Café in Benzonia. To register visit: <https://honumg.info/CrystalCafe>

**COVID-19 Case Counts**

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is reporting the following case information:

- On Tuesday, October 26, 20 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (6), and Leelanau (14).
- On Wednesday, October 27, 17 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (9), and Leelanau (8).
- Today, October 28, 11 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (4) and Leelanau (7).

As of 4:00 p.m. today, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,635, Leelanau– 1,658
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 151, Leelanau– 127
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,449, Leelanau– 1,511
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 35, Leelanau– 20
- Hospitalized: 203 total; 2 currently

Media Contact:

Rachel Pomeroy, PIO

231-882-6085

[RPomeroy@bldhd.org](mailto:RPomeroy@bldhd.org)

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