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Wood County Data Show Masks and Vaccinations Reduce COVID-19 Transmission in Schools

BOWLING GREEN — Since the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, 47 Wood County students and five staff have developed COVID-19 after being exposed in schools. Of those students and staff who became sick following school exposure, nearly 75% were unvaccinated and unmasked.

Data indicate that staff and students 12 and older who were unmasked and unvaccinated were more than three times more likely to develop COVID than those who wore masks or were vaccinated. Of those who were both unmasked and unvaccinated, one of every 30 who were exposed in school developed COVID.

“The data show that masks and vaccines are effective at reducing the spread of the virus in schools,” said Health Commissioner Benjamin Robison. “Last year, consistent application of comprehensive prevention measures including masks, distancing and quarantining of people who were exposed in schools resulted in virtually no transmission of COVID. These measures are especially important given the increased transmissibility of the Delta variant.”

At the start of the school year, Wood County Health Department outlined the following prevention measures to minimize school transmission:

- Wearing masks in schools,
- Maintaining as much distance as possible,
- Staying home when sick and testing for anyone who could have COVID,
- Identifying exposed individuals and staying home while at risk for becoming ill,
- Regularly washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, maximizing ventilation and cleaning and disinfecting.

“Our schools bring together students of all backgrounds and walks of life—students who themselves may be more at risk of serious illness, or who have family members who are more at risk,” said Robison. “We want to create an environment in our schools where everyone, including kids who have underlying conditions or at-risk family members, feels safe.”

Beginning next week, Wood County Health Department will publish data on school transmission every two weeks as part of its regular Thursday COVID-19 updates.

The mission of Wood County Health Department is to prevent disease, promote healthy lifestyles and protect the health of everyone in Wood County. Our Community Health Center provides comprehensive medical services for men, women and children. We welcome all patients, including uninsured or underinsured clients, regardless of their ability to pay, and we accept most third-party insurance. For more information, visit woodcountyhealth.org.

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