

Wellbeing Work

 Meeker, McLeod, Sibley
Healthy Communities

April 2021

Welcome! This newsletter is designed to offer support to HR staff and worksite wellness coordinators who work in organizations in our area promote better health and wellbeing at workplaces. Since the onset of the pandemic, we also work to keep our wellness partners up to date on the latest resources and guidance around COVID-19. Please note that any reference to organizations, websites, products or services in this newsletter is intended for educational purposes and does not constitute an endorsement.

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Federal Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Pause

Minnesota is following the federal recommendation to pause use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine while the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) review data about an extremely rare type of blood clot that has been reported in six people who received that vaccine in the United States. Minnesota officials are not aware of any cases occurring among the more than 184,000 Minnesotans who have received this vaccine.

If you received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine recently and you develop a severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination, contact your health care provider or go to the emergency room or urgent care. If you received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine more than a month ago, you are unlikely to develop this related condition. Contact your health care provider if you have concerns.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine represents about 6.6% of the total supply of vaccines Minnesota has received to date, so the pause is not expected to dramatically slow down vaccinations. However, anyone who currently has an appointment to receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine should watch for a notification from their provider about canceling, postponing, or rescheduling the appointment. If your appointment is cancelled, you can [Find Vaccine Locations](#) and appointments through the Vaccine Locator map, local pharmacies, or your health care provider.

Learn more:

- MDH news release: [State advises providers to follow federal pause on use of Johnson & Johnson vaccine during review](#)
- [Health Alert: Immediate Pause on Johnson and Johnson Vaccine Administration \(PDF\)](#)
- [CDC: Joint CDC and FDA Statement on Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

Over 2 Million Vaccine Doses Administered Learn Where to Schedule Yours

Over 2.25 million COVID-19 vaccines have been administered to Minnesotans! There's still a long way to go, but Minnesota is committed to building a reliable network of options for everyone to get their shot.

For vaccine data, vaccine locations, or to sign up for the Vaccine Connector, visit [COVID-19 Vaccinations](#). Vaccine availability is becoming more readily available. For information on locations and appointments, contact your county's public health office, your local pharmacy, your primary provider, or sign up on the Vaccine Connector at [COVID-19 Vaccinations](#).

- Meeker County: (320)693-5370 [Meeker County Website](#)
- McLeod County: (320)864-3185 [McLeod County Website](#)
- Sibley County: (507)237-4035 [Sibley County Website](#)



2 Million

VACCINE DOSES ADMINISTERED

STAY SAFE MN

Source: Minnesota Department of Health

COVID-19 Variants

Variants are common with a virus like COVID-19. Viruses constantly change through mutation, and new variants of a virus are expected to occur over time.

Multiple COVID-19 variants are circulating globally. Variants first detected in the United Kingdom (B.1.1.7), Brazil (P.1), and South Africa (B.1.351) have been detected in the United States. All three variants have been identified in Minnesota. MDH and our partners are actively testing new positive test samples to continue to detect variants and learn more.

So far, the B.1.1.7 variant has been the most common in Minnesota. Early data shows that the B.1.1.7 variant spreads more easily and can be as much as 50% more contagious than the original virus. There is also concern the B.1.1.7 variant may be associated with more severe disease compared to other variants. More research is needed to confirm these findings and what it will mean for vaccination efforts. For more information, visit [CDC: Variants of the Virus that Causes COVID-19](#)

As encouraging as the vaccination numbers are, we need to remember that we have a state population of 5.5 million and most Minnesotans are not yet fully vaccinated. Millions of Minnesotans are still susceptible to COVID-19 infection and the health impacts that can go with it. Continue to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19: wear a mask, stay 6 feet from others, avoid gatherings, wash your hands often, and stay home if you feel sick or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

Because variants can spread more easily, it is important to get tested. Families with school-age children returning to in-person learning should get tested every two weeks. Kids involved in sports or after-school activities should get tested once a week: [COVID-19 Testing for Kids and Families](#)

Source: Minnesota Department of Health

Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People

It is up to all of us to protect ourselves and others by getting vaccinated and following recommendations to slow the spread of COVID-19. Even if you are fully vaccinated (2 weeks after your final dose), it is important to follow precautions:

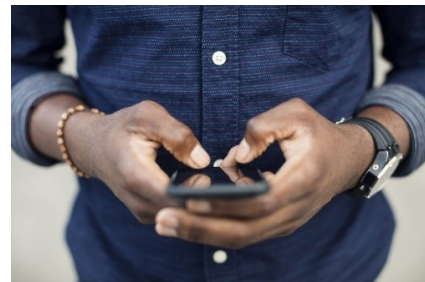
- Continue to wear a mask that fits well and stay at least 6 feet away from other people whenever you are in public or visiting with unvaccinated people from multiple households.
- Wash your hands often.
- Stay home if you are sick, especially if you have been around someone who has COVID-19. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should get tested.
- Avoid crowds and poorly-ventilated spaces.
- Delay unnecessary domestic or international travel. If you do travel, you'll still need to follow CDC requirements and recommendations.
- Follow guidance specific to your workplace.

For more recommendations on gatherings and quarantine, visit [About COVID-19 Vaccine: For fully vaccinated people](#).

Source: Minnesota Department of Health

Stay Socially Connected while Social Distancing

It's been a lonely year for many. We are closer than ever to the end of this pandemic and the time when we can feel more safe and comfortable connecting with others in person. This is so important because we as human beings are hardwired for connection, which is essential to our well-being.



While some things are beginning to feel “normal” again, many aspects of work and home life may never be the same. We still need to take precautions like wearing a mask and social distancing. * But social distancing doesn't have to mean not connecting. We can still stay engaged and foster relationships in new and creative ways. Consider these ways to stay safe and connected:

- **Join a virtual co-working space.** [Focusmate](#) offers three free sessions a week. If you work from home, this can offer a sense of connection and the feel of a creative environment.
- **Schedule regular video calls with loved ones.** Face-to-face on a screen is the next best thing to in person communication.
- **Host a virtual book club.** Pick a book to read together and a date and time to chat about it.
- **Set up a group text or chat.** Use your phone's message app, or another app such as GroupMe, to keep in touch with family members, neighbors, or friends.
- **Check in on each other.** Reach out to your older neighbors or loved ones that you haven't heard from in a while. Give them a call or drop them a note to brighten their day.
- **Join an online support group.** Knowing that others are going through similar struggles can help relieve feelings of loneliness. Check out [Mental Health America](#) or schedule time to “vent” with a trusted friend.
- **Take it outside!** Go for a family walk in your neighborhood or meet friends for a socially distanced walk, bike ride, tennis match, or round of golf. Fresh air and movement are great for body and mind.
- **Exchange healthy recipes.** Swap your favorites, and maybe even plan a meal to make at home and enjoy through a virtual dinner party.
- **Get creative.** Break out the art supplies with your children or friends (or on your own!) and create cards for family members, friends, and neighbors.
- **Tinker with tools.** Check out [Men's Shed](#). This club provides tools and materials for (mainly) older guys to pursue interests and passions, learn something new, and share skills.

Protect your Mental Health



COVID-19* and the events of the past year have brought on extraordinary amounts of stress. It is no surprise that a [recent study](#) showed that many Americans are now grappling with at least one mental health or substance abuse problem.

Conditions such as depression or anxiety are real, common, and treatable. And recovery is possible. ***If you think you may have a mental health condition, take this free, online quiz:***

<https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/>

8 Tips to Improve and Protect your Mental Health:

1. Get enough sleep – Most adults need 7–9 hours of sleep to feel their best.
2. Exercise – Find something you enjoy that you can easily fit into your day.
3. Eat well – Choose mostly whole, unprocessed foods to boost your mood and energy.
4. Meditate – Just 10 minutes a day can help you feel less stressed and anxious, and more relaxed.
5. Talk it out - Call a friend or family member, or find a therapist:
<https://screening.mhanational.org/content/how-do-i-find-therapist/>
6. Limit alcohol – Drinking too much can make you feel more depressed and anxious. For help, check out these free resources:
 - The Alcohol Experiment - <https://learn.thisnakedmind.com/the-alcohol-experiment-registration>
 - SMART Recovery – <http://www.smartrecovery.org/community/>
 - Alcoholics Anonymous – <https://aa.org/>
7. Organize a small space – Cleaning out a drawer or closet can be incredibly calming.
8. Take a hot shower or bath – Literally wash away the stress of the day.

Play at Work? Yes!

Definitions:

Exercise - engage in physical activity to sustain or improve health and fitness

Play - engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose

Be honest. Which one—exercise or play—would you rather do? Chances are you (as well as your employees) prefer play. But why choose? Consider instead how you can make physical activity fun. By adding entertainment value, you will increase the chances of getting your employees to move more, whether at home or work.



At work:

- Establish a walking route by your building. Routes of ½ to 1 mile are best for quick breaks during the workday. Create and post a map of the route to encourage employees to try it. (Search for “create a walking map” to find various online apps that can help you.) Once a route is set, create a [“poker walk”](#) or similar activity to get employees out walking.
- Give “walk or work” coupons. Employees can use the coupon to take a 15-minute activity break at their discretion. Or create a “walk or work” policy that allows all employees to take one 15-minute break a day to go for a walk, shoot hoops, or other options.
- Allow and encourage walking meetings. If unsure of the benefits, check out this [article](#) from the Harvard Business Review.

- Sponsor mini-competitions of hula-hoops, ping-pong, or relays. Short breaks in the day that stimulate the body also stimulate the brain and make employees more creative and productive.

Away from work:

- Subsidize participation, or sponsor a team, in a community race. This is a great incentive for those with a competitive side, and helps employees be active while doing good.
- Organize an employee sports equipment swap.
- Start a “Time off for Fitness” policy that allows employees to exchange unused PTO, vacation, or sick leave hours for the purchase of sports equipment, club memberships, or activity classes (yoga, spinning, etc.).

Source: Hennepin County

National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Though traffic has dropped significantly since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, [our roads have only gotten more dangerous](#). On a typical day, more than 700 people are still injured in distracted driving crashes. Talking on a cell phone – even hands-free – or texting or programming an in-vehicle infotainment system diverts your attention away from driving. Keep yourself and others around you safe and #justdrive.

Join NSC during Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April to help make our roadways and our people safer. Whether you’re driving a forklift, semi-truck or just headed home after work, attentive driving is more important than ever. Create a distracted driving program and engage your workforce with ready-made communications and resources.

Employers have a significant role in reducing vehicle crashes. Through workplace policies and education, employers can help protect their workforce, protect their organizations and, in turn, protect employees' own families and communities.

NSC has released the [free NSC Safe Driving Toolkit](#)

- It helps safety and HR professionals build senior management support for policies and education to influence safer driving behaviors
- It provides policies and educational materials that look at the top factors in fatal crashes: distraction, alcohol, drugs and fatigue
- It contains myriad safe driving resources and ready-made communication tools to educate employees, including videos, fact sheets and FAQs, infographics, posters, survivor advocate stories and more

Source: National Safety Council

Needed COVID-19 Care Bag Swag

The Meeker Cares Leadership team has been creating and distributing “Covid Care bags” to students being sent home due to infection with COVID-19 or due to quarantine to exposure to Covid-19. The goal is to provide a families with updated covid/mental health resources as well as activities, snacks and school supplies for students. We are currently seeking left over corporate SWAG such as Frisbees, stress balls, pens etc. (we are not currently accepting political or religious items.) Should you have anything to share please contact Kevin at the United Way 320-235-1050.

Guidance and Resources

A Comprehensive list of Community Resources is available on the Meeker County website. This list is updated bi-weekly and includes information on the following and more!!

- Agri-business & Farm Resources
- Business and Employer Support (*See also MN Unemployment*)
- Chemical Dependency Resources & Recovery Support
- Crisis Resources (*See also Chemical Dependency and Mental Health*)
- Food/Nutrition/Dining Services
- Healthcare
- Housing, Evictions, Utilities, Energy Assistance and Shelter Resources
- Mental Health and Well Being
- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
- (Office of) Minnesota Governor Tim Walz

- Childcare, Schools, Higher Education
- Senior Care and Services
- Social Services and related services
- Testing, Tracing, Quarantine & Isolation
- Transportation and Travel
- Vaccines and Vaccine Clinics
- Volunteer Opportunities



ONLINE RESOURCES

Useful Links For Minnesota Employers



Please Visit:

MDH Minnesota Helpline

MN OSHA:Workplace Safety
Concerns

Business closures, workplace safety,
unemployment:
[651-297-1304](tel:651-297-1304) or [1-800-657-3504](tel:1-800-657-3504)
Weekdays: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Email: health.covid19@state.mn.us

Workplace safety or health
questions or concerns
[651-284-5050](tel:651-284-5050) or [877-470-6742](tel:877-470-6742)
Email: osha.compliance@state.mn.us

Minnesota COVID-19 Dashboard

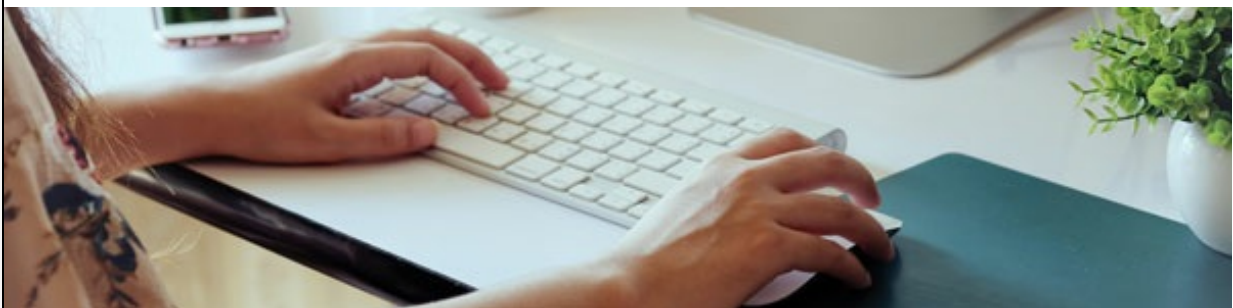
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About us:

Monthly newsletters are compiled by the Well Being at Work Leadership Team. The Well Being at Work Consortium hosts quarterly meetings and offers technical support to employers located in Meeker McLeod and Sibley Counties. Grant dollars are available for workplace wellness initiative.

For more information visit the Healthy Communities website at <https://www.mmshealthycommunities.org/> and click on the Wellbeing at Work tab.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

