



LOCAL HEALTH
DEPARTMENTS
SERVING THE PEOPLE OF:

Lee 276-346-2011
Norton 276-328-8000
Scott 276-386-1312
Wise 276-328-8000

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Virginia Department of Health
Lenowisco Health District
134 Roberts Ave SW
Wise, VA 24293

Noelle Bissell, MD
Acting District Director
Noelle.bissell@vdh.virginia.gov

www.vdh.virginia.gov/lenowisco/

September 27, 2021

Dear Parents, Staff, and Students in the Lenowisco Health District:

Just like you, we were all hopeful that the pandemic would not negatively impact another school year. Unfortunately, the delta surge hit just as schools were preparing to open, and we continue to see very high case numbers daily in both children and adults. Your support over the last 21 months of this pandemic has been most appreciated, and we need to ask for your ongoing support as we navigate the current situation. Please know that your local health department recognizes the importance of in-person learning and wants your children to be in school as much as possible; we are committed to ensuring that we minimize any risk to our children's health and safety in these efforts.

Below is a table of cases by week for each locality for the last two months. There has been exponential growth in both in children and adults. These numbers do not reflect home tests that have not been reported, so these case numbers are an **under-representation** of cases in Lenowisco's Health District.

COVID-19 Cases for the Lenowisco Health District by Week											
Locality	Total for July	August 1-8	August 9-14	August 15-22	August 23-29	August 30-31	Total for August	Sept 1-5	Sept 6-12	Sept 13-19	Total for September (till the 21 st)
Lee	32 (4)	35 (12)	41 (12)	49 (19)	79 (29)	13 (5)	217 (77)	75 (25)	111 (29)	89 (20)	299 (81)
Norton	15 (6)	19 (10)	11 (3)	16 (4)	10 (3)	2 (2)	58 (22)	9 (4)	20 (5)	15 (4)	60 (23)
Scott	65 (14)	43 (8)	42 (7)	53 (11)	72 (20)	8 (2)	218 (48)	50 (17)	69 (15)	67 (15)	196 (51)
Wise	133 (21)	76 (16)	74 (15)	105 (33)	119 (40)	15 (3)	389 (107)	62 (16)	132 (23)	125 (26)	340 (72)
Grand Total	245 (45)	173 (46)	168 (37)	223 (67)	280 (92)	38 (12)	882 (254)	196 (62)	332 (72)	296 (65)	895 (227)

*Numbers represent total new cases, all ages, for the data range. The number in parentheses are the cases 18 years of age and younger. **preliminary data as of 5pm on Sept 21st, 2021. Numbers for localities may change after we speak with the individual and verify address.*

We are seeing transmission in our schools and extracurricular activities. We have identified multiple outbreaks in schools and sports teams that could have been prevented. By not keeping their children home after exposure, testing positive, or developing symptoms, parents are jeopardizing all of our children being able to continue attending school in person AND participate in extracurricular activities.

We are grateful that more testing options, including home tests, are available so people can quickly determine if they have COVID-19. A positive home test should be treated just like any other positive test through providers, pharmacies, and the health department. Those with a positive test need to isolate for





LOCAL HEALTH
DEPARTMENTS
SERVING THE PEOPLE OF:

Lee 276-346-2011
Norton 276-328-8000
Scott 276-386-1312
Wise 276-328-8000

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Virginia Department of Health
Lenowisco Health District
134 Roberts Ave SW
Wise, VA 24293

Noelle Bissell, MD
Acting District Director
Noelle.bissell@vdh.virginia.gov

www.vdh.virginia.gov/lenowisco/

10 days from symptom onset or test date if asymptomatic. Anyone taking a home test should notify his/her provider or the health department of the result. Household members of positive individuals need to stay home from school, sports, and other extracurricular activities too and seek further guidance from the health department. Anyone with symptoms, even if only mild and not feeling ill (e.g. runny nose, headache, sore throat), should be tested.

If your child tests positive for COVID-19, please notify the school so that prompt contact tracing can occur. This will help reduce transmission and protect other students, faculty, staff and their families. If a household member tests positive, your child needs to stay home, regardless of whether your child is symptomatic and you should seek further guidance from the health department.

If your child is symptomatic, your child needs to stay home and get tested for COVID-19. There are many other contagious respiratory illnesses circulating right now, so it is critically important that symptomatic children not come to school.

Children under 12 are not yet eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, and our district vaccination rates for the younger age groups are low. Vaccination not only protects your child, but it also protects everyone else who cannot yet be vaccinated. Vaccination is also very protective against severe illness, hospitalization and death.

Percent Fully Vaccinated in Lenowisco Health District by Age Group	
12-15 years old	21.2%
16-17 years old	28.9%
18-24 years old	29.5%
25-34 years old	25.6%
35-44 years old	33.8%
45-54 years old	41.8%
55-64 years old	52.2%
65-74 years old	63.5%
75-84 years old	64.6%
85 years and older	61.2%



LOCAL HEALTH
DEPARTMENTS
SERVING THE PEOPLE OF:

Lee 276-346-2011
Norton 276-328-8000
Scott 276-386-1312
Wise 276-328-8000

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Virginia Department of Health
Lenowisco Health District
134 Roberts Ave SW
Wise, VA 24293

Noelle Bissell, MD
Acting District Director
Noelle.bissell@vdh.virginia.gov

www.vdh.virginia.gov/lenowisco/

We understand that our community, parents, students, and staff are tired. Your health department staff are tired, too. We would all love to get back to "business as usual," but now is not the time to compromise on strategies that we know work. We are asking everyone to take an active role in stopping the spread of COVID-19 in our community. We need to support our students so they can continue to learn in person by wearing a mask in public, staying home if sick, and getting vaccinated. This will also help to decrease the burden on our hospital systems and medical providers.

Attached are documents with additional information and guidance about when to keep your child home from school, as well as the contact tracing and quarantine guidance that is being followed in the Lenowisco Health District.

We truly appreciate your partnership in our efforts to keep children in school!

Noelle S. Bissell, M.D.
Acting Director, Lenowisco Health District