

## For Immediate Release

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### COVID-19 Variant in Washtenaw County

*Washtenaw County Health Department reminds all to continue COVID-19 precautions*

YPSILANTI, Mich., Jan 16, 2021 – Earlier today, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) announced that a [case of the COVID-19 variant B117](#) was identified in a Washtenaw County adult with recent travel to the United Kingdom. Washtenaw County Health Department reminds everyone to adhere to COVID-19 prevention recommendations and prevent the spread of illness whenever possible.

“This doesn’t change what we need to do. But preventing transmission at every opportunity is now even more important because this variant appears to be more contagious and may impact more people faster than the current strain,” says Juan Luis Marquez, MD, MPH, medical director with Washtenaw County Health Department.

The B117 variant appears to be more contagious but not necessarily more serious than the primary strain of COVID-19. Based on current evidence, the vaccine will be effective against this variant. While presence of this variant is detected with current testing methods, additional sequencing is needed to distinguish it from other more common COVID-19 variants circulating in the community.

Faster spread of illness is a serious concern because the number of people sickened increases so more may become seriously ill or die. Prevent transmission whenever possible. Use or increase use of effective prevention strategies.

- Wear a face mask around others
- Keep at least 6 feet apart from others
- Clean hands frequently
- Avoid crowded areas or gatherings
- Ventilate indoor spaces if around others
- Seek [testing](#) if ill, exposed, or after travel
- Follow [isolation or quarantine](#) guidance if ill, exposed, or waiting on test results
- Get vaccinated when vaccine becomes available to you

Washtenaw County Health Department continues to vaccinate individuals who live or work in the county as quickly as possible, according to MHDHDS guidance, and in coordination with our local health systems and providers. Vaccination updates are available at [www.washtenaw.org/covid19vaccine](http://www.washtenaw.org/covid19vaccine) or by calling 734-544-6700. Please reserve phone and [email](#) capacity for those who cannot easily check the website.

## Additional Resources

Washtenaw County Health Department  
555 Towner Street • Ypsilanti, MI 48198  
Phone: 734-544-6700 • Fax: 734-544-6705  
[washtenaw.org/health](http://washtenaw.org/health)



Environmental Health Division  
705 N Zeeb Road • Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
Phone: 734-222-3800 • Fax: 734-222-3930  
[washtenaw.org/envhealth](http://washtenaw.org/envhealth)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [New COVID-19 Variants](#)  
MDHHS [News Release 1-16-21](#)

**Washtenaw County Health Department**

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community, including responding to health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs. Visit us at [washtenaw.org/health](http://washtenaw.org/health) or call 734-544-6700.

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