



Douglas County Public Health

Douglas County Department of Health & Human Services
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19: Public Health Advisory

On Wednesday, March 31st, the Wisconsin State Supreme Court overturned the current public health emergency, which also ended the mask order. Though the mask order is no longer in place, COVID-19 remains present in Douglas County and outbreaks continue to occur in nearby communities, impacting people of all ages.

With only 33% of Douglas County residents having received at least one dose of vaccine, ending the use of an effective tool such as masking too soon could contribute to a spike in cases, the disruption of work and school due to isolation and quarantine, and risk of severe illness and death.

Public Health recommends people continue to wear a facemask while in public for a few more weeks, allowing time to increase vaccination rates and reduce disease transmission. This recommendation aligns with the City of Superior's mask order, which continues to be in effect through April 30th.

Here is what we know:

As of April 1, 2021, the number of positive test results in Wisconsin since the onset of this pandemic has reached more than 577,195. Of those experiencing severe COVID-19 symptoms, 27,598 people have required hospitalization, and 6,622 have died. Douglas County has had 3,750 people test positive for COVID-19. Of those, 138 people have required hospitalization, and 30 have died.

There continues to be cases of COVID-19 throughout Wisconsin, including all Western Wisconsin counties. There have also been cases associated with the variants that may be more easily spread. While there is no longer a statewide mask mandate, it is still the recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Public Health to follow all COVID-19 precautions. This recommendation includes the wearing of a mask when in a public setting, enclosed space, or anytime there is close contact to another person outside of your household.

Masks assist those around you by being a simple barrier that helps to prevent your respiratory droplets from reaching others. When you breathe, talk, sneeze, or do anything that increases respirations you are releasing respiratory droplets that can spread the virus. The virus can spread before someone develops symptoms or even if no symptoms are experienced.

With the number of people testing positive for COVID-19 on the decline and access to vaccine on the rise, we will continue to make our way through this pandemic. Public Health strongly recommends all people in Douglas County continue their efforts to protect friends and family and do their part to end disease transmission. Isolation and quarantine requirements remain in effect and apply to everyone except those who are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic.

What you can do:

Following these COVID-19 precautions in combination with vaccination is the best defense we have against this virus:

- Wear a mask in public places
- Physically distance from people outside of your household
- Avoid crowds
- Wash your hands often
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
- Stay home when sick
- Get vaccinated

What businesses can do:

Businesses can take action to protect their workforce and customers by following the CDC guidance, including continuing to require people to wear a face mask.

What Public Health will do:

1. Monitor the Wisconsin Electronic Communicable Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS) for COVID-19 test results daily
2. Contact tracing, isolation and quarantine as directed by the CDC and State Health Department
3. Monitor for and respond to local COVID-19 outbreaks
4. Monitor for illness trends, variants
5. Provide guidance for businesses as well as the general public

Check the Douglas County web page for updates and alerts.

- Douglas County COVID-19 Dashboard: <https://www.douglascountywi.org/1124/COVID-19-Updates>
 - Wisconsin Department of Health Services COVID-19 : <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19>
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