

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COVID-19 LATEST UPDATES

Menominee, Shawano — Shawano-Menominee Counties Health Department would like to provide a few updates regarding COVID-19. We have seen increases in COVID-19 cases across Wisconsin. In both Shawano and Menominee Counties, we have seen doubling of cases within a week's time. Both counties currently have a high COVID-19 activity level.

Public health continues to use the tools we have available to help limit the spread of COVID-19. We view our goal to be to save as many lives as possible. It has been a long road since this pandemic started, and we thank you for helping us to save lives in Shawano and Menominee Counties. Below are some of our current tools and some updates to public health guidelines.

CONTACT TRACING:

Communicable disease reporting is mandated by state and federal laws and contact tracing has been part of public health for many years. Contact tracing helps to identify individuals who may have come in contact with a virus. By finding the people who have been in contact with a virus, we can stop them from potentially spreading the virus to others, especially if they do not know they have it. Any health department may contact you, it depends on where you may have been noted as a close contact to someone. We understand there are concerns about scams out there, so here are some links to information regarding what to expect with contact tracing.

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) – Contact Tracing: Do your part to keep your family, friends, and community safe.
- [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#) – Contact Tracing: What to expect when you get a call from a contact tracer.

USE OF MASKS AND FACIAL COVERINGS:

Governor Tony Evers declared a new Public Health Emergency on July 30, 2020 and also issued an Emergency Order and masking mandate for Wisconsin. Masking is another effective tool we can use to help limit spread of COVID-19. People who may not know they are infectious can spread the illness to others when they cough, sneeze, talk, sing, or raise their voice. Wearing a mask or facial covering helps to decrease the potential of people spreading illness without symptoms.

If we would like our students to get back to school in September (and keep schools open), it is important that we start wearing our facial coverings now to help take the case counts down. Anyone over the age of 5, please wear your face coverings in public places and especially in situations where it is difficult to maintain physical distancing. Here is a link to the Governor's order related to requiring face coverings in certain situations and some additional information related to use of facial coverings.

- [Emergency Order #1](#)
- [Use of Masks to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)
- [Considerations for Wearing Masks](#)

EVENT PLANNING GUIDANCE:

Shawano-Menominee Counties Health Department receives a lot of questions about whether or not events should move forward. To address some of these questions, we would like to present to you an Event Planner Safety Assessment. Anyone who is considering holding an event is encouraged to complete this assessment and follow these considerations.

- [Event Planner Safety Assessment](#)

QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION GUIDANCE UPDATES:

There have been some recent updates to recent quarantine and isolation guidance. We have also been made aware of some confusion about the recommendations for isolation or quarantine. Here are some of the most important points to note about the current quarantine and isolation guidelines.

- [Isolation](#) is the time that someone, who is sick, is to stay home and away from public places to avoid spreading the virus to others.
 - Isolation lasts at least 10 days from when symptoms started. In addition to waiting at least 10 days since symptoms started, your symptoms must be significantly improved for at least 24 hours (without medication) before returning to usual activities. (This was recently updated.)
 - Someone who does not have symptoms but tests positive due to exposure, must remain symptom free for 10 days following the date of the test.
- [Quarantine](#) is the time that a person (who is not sick) who was a close contact to someone who was sick, is to stay home and away from public places to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus to others.
 - [Quarantine lasts 14 days from the last date of contact.](#)
 - A negative test during a 14 day quarantine does NOT shorten the quarantine period. A person may still come down with the virus after being tested if enough time has not passed since the exposure. Testing is not recommended for close contacts except for certain circumstances that may be suggested by public health.
 - It is important to note, depending on the situation, a person who is a [household member of someone diagnosed with COVID-19](#) may need to remain in quarantine for longer based on the sick person's isolation release.
- Being a [close contact](#) to someone who tests positive for COVID-19 would be defined as one of the following:
 - Direct physical contact with the person (hug, kiss, handshake, etc...).
 - Within 6 feet of the person for more than 15 minutes (in a 24 hour time period).
 - Had contact with the person's respiratory secretions (coughed/sneezed on, contact with dirty tissue, sharing a drinking glass/food/towels or other personal items).
 - Stayed overnight for at least one night in a household with the person.
- Here is an updated decision tree for isolation and quarantine. You may use this at a glance to help decide who and when people should be in isolation or quarantine.
 - [Updated Isolation and Quarantine Algorithm](#)

Once again, thank you all for your help with keeping case counts down in Shawano and Menominee Counties. Together we can slow the spread of the virus to save lives and help preserve businesses and activities. Be safe and be well.

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