

Jon Doemel, County Executive
Doug Gieryn, Director/Health Officer

Office Hours: M-F 8:00am-4:30pm
Toll-Free: 800-250-3110
Fax: 920-232-3370

health@co.winnebago.wi.us
www.winnebagopublichealth.org



Public Health
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**Winnebago County
Health Department**

112 Otter Avenue
Oshkosh, WI 54903-2808
Phone: 920-232-3000

211 N Commercial Street
Neenah, WI 54956
Phone: 920-727-2894

Find us on Facebook and Twitter
@WinnebagoHealth

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Media Contact:

Ashley Mukasa, Communications Specialist
920-232-3352

amukasa@co.winnebago.wi.us

Text Messaging Bolsters Health Department's Outreach to COVID-19 Cases **Winnebago County residents with COVID-19 can expect a text message from the Health Department**

OSHKOSH, Wis. (January 26, 2022) – People who have tested positive for COVID-19 may now receive a text message from the Winnebago County Health Department with a link to isolation guidance. This is another way for the health department to share important information with those who need it in a timely manner. The health department will continue to send letters and call people who live and work in the highest-risk settings, are 65 or older, and anyone who did not provide a phone number at the time of testing.

"The health department had been calling every positive case and sending a letter in the mail with isolation guidance and resources. Unfortunately, with the record number of cases we have seen with Omicron, we have not been able to reach everyone who tests positive," stated Doug Gieryn, Winnebago County Health Department Director/Health Officer.

"Implementing additional electronic methods of outreach to people with COVID-19 ensures they have the information needed to help reduce the spread of the virus."

The health department urges everyone who has tested positive or has symptoms of COVID-19 to isolate away from others for a minimum of five days, regardless of vaccination status. This applies to all types of tests, whether it was a PCR, rapid antigen or at-home test. The guidance differs for people depending on whether or not they had symptoms.

- If you had symptoms of COVID-19, your isolation period ends after:
 - You are fever-free for at least 24 hours without using fever-reducing medications;
 - AND other symptoms have largely resolved;
 - AND at least five days have passed since your symptoms started.
- If you did not develop symptoms of COVID-19 but received a positive test result, your isolation period ends five days after your test date. If you develop symptoms at any point, even after you get tested, you will need to restart your isolation period and follow the guidance above.
- After your isolation period, you should continue to wear a mask around others, including those in your home, for an additional five days.
- If you are unable to wear a mask around others, you should isolate for at least 10 days.

The Winnebago County Health Department also urges positive COVID-19 cases to notify anyone they were in close contact with up to two days before they tested positive or began to have symptoms. This includes anyone within six feet for 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period, even if masks were worn. Close contacts who are unvaccinated or not up to date on their vaccination should quarantine at home, away from others for five days and then continue to wear a mask for five additional days. If your close contacts have been recently vaccinated or boosted, they are not required to quarantine at home but will need to wear a mask around others for 10 days. Every close contact should get tested five days after exposure. People should also notify their physician, employer, school or daycare if they or anyone in their household tests positive, were exposed, or are feeling ill. In addition, it is important to monitor symptoms and call 911 if you have trouble breathing, have pain in the chest, new confusion, blue-colored skin or cannot stay awake.

"This new guidance can be confusing, especially for those with ongoing exposure that cannot separate in the home, so we encourage anyone with questions to reach out to our COVID-19 hotline. We have staff available to answer your questions and guide you through the isolation or quarantine recommendations," Gieryn added.

For questions or guidance, please contact the Winnebago County Health Department's COVID-19 Hotline at 920-232-3026 or visit www.winnebagopublichealth.org.

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