



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Winnebago County
Health Department**

Winnebago County Health Department COVID-19 Events Guidance

Updated 8/20/20

COVID-19 continues to spread across our state and country. How closely you follow protective measures impacts your risk of exposure. The virus easily spreads at events where you cannot control who you come into contact with and there is limited physical distancing, handwashing and other protective measures. At this time, the Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) does not recommend holding or attending a gathering or event with people outside of your household.

Virtual gatherings or gatherings with people you live have the lowest risk of spreading COVID-19. The more risk factors present at an event or gathering, the higher the chance of spreading the. Risk factors include:

- Attendees are from outside your household
- Attendees do not wear a mask
- Attendees do not stay 6 feet apart
- The gathering occurs indoors
- High noise levels cause attendees to have to talk loudly and be close to one another
- Alcohol is served
- Attendees share food, drinks or utensils
- No hand washing or sanitizing stations
- Commonly touched surfaces are not disinfected regularly
- Attendees have traveled from outside the local area
- Attendee has regular contact or lives with someone who is high risk
- Attendee has underlying health conditions making them higher risk

If you must hold or attend a gathering or event, the following considerations are meant to enhance the protection of individuals and communities.

How many people can safely attend an event?

In general, the number that is chosen should allow individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart from each other. Rather than focusing on an ideal number, event organizers should focus on the ability to reduce and limit contact between attendees, staff, and others. In general, your risk for getting and spreading COVID-19 increases with the more people you interact with, the more closely you interact with them, and the longer that interaction. Indoor spaces are more risky than outdoor spaces because it can be harder to keep people at least 6 feet apart indoors and the ventilation is better outdoors.

For Event Organizers:

- Know that gatherings (prolonged contact with others) are high-risk activities. Outdoor gatherings carry less risk than indoor gatherings.
- Consult current health guidance for best practices:
 - [WEDC Guidance on Outdoor Gatherings](#)
 - [CDC Community and Large Events](#)

- Require all participants to wear masks or face coverings that cover the entire nose and mouth if they are able. Consider providing face coverings for attendees who do not have one and do not allow entry for people that are able to wear a face covering but refuse. Communicate clearly to attendees ahead of the event about this requirement and maintain the requirement throughout the event. Participants should be aware they may be asked to leave if they do not comply – establish a zero-tolerance policy.
- Implement strategies to keep all participants that are not from the same household at least 6 feet apart.
 - Change festival/event layout to minimize crowding and allow for adequate physical distancing.
 - Move seating options to allow for 6 feet of distancing between household groups.
 - Increase the spacing between vendors to allow attendees and vendors to maintain a safe distance of no less than 6 feet.
 - Provide physical distancing reminders via signs and other communication methods.
- Require that all sick individuals (staff, vendors, or attendees) stay home.
- Encourage participants not to have physical contact (hugs, handshaking, etc.)
- Provide handwashing stations and/or hand sanitizers for both vendors and attendees.
- Frequently clean common touchpoints.
- Prohibit food samples.
- Do not offer shared food options (i.e., a buffet, condiment stations, etc.).
- Maintain an attendee or sign-in list with at least one form of contact information such as a phone number or email.
- Develop flexible refund policies for attendees.
- Take into consideration that live music and alcohol consumption carry increased risks because they often result in people being less likely to adhere to physical distancing and other protective measures.

For Festival/Event Attendees:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover any coughs and sneezes with your elbow.
- Wear a face covering.
- Use hand sanitizer or handwashing stations frequently, if available.
- Maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance from other attendees and vendors whenever possible.

For Vendors:

- Vendors should NOT attend the festival/event if they feel sick or have come into contact with someone who feels or has felt sick.
- All staff should wear a face covering if they are able.
- Ensure all forms of payment, including credit/debit cards, tokens, or checks, can continue to be used at the event and for any alternative shopping methods.
- Have only one staff person handling payments. Although there is little evidence that money, tokens, or credit cards can transmit COVID-19, having one person take money and talk with customers helps limit the contact of the vendors to possible transmission.
- Minimize shopping time at vendors.
- Only allow staff at the booth to handle products.
- Provide single-use bags to customers.
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces, including tables and tablecloths, before the event.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces regularly.
- Limit customer contact with products; only allow vendors to touch products before sale.

- Maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance from customers and other vendors whenever possible.
- Remind customers to maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance between each other while waiting for their turn and moving about the vendor area.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water.
- Use hand sanitizer only on visibly clean hands; hand sanitizer is not effective when hands are visibly dirty.

For Food Vendors:

- Vendors who serve food should consider ways of serving while also practicing physical distancing.
- Wear a face covering.
- Only allow staff at the booth to handle products.
- Use single-use gloves where needed; if clean, gloves may be worn up to four hours.
- Customers should not be permitted to share items at food stations. For example, vendors should not designate a “condiment station” as these stations promote the sharing of food containers.
- Avoid offering any self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets, salad bars and drink stations.
- Provide disposable utensils and napkins with each individual food order. Utensils and napkins should not be placed on a communal table.
- Use barrier tables (an extra 3-foot-wide table between the customer and the product) or put a checkout table in front of the product; if customers can’t see what is being sold, use a chalk or dry erase board to list products.
- Sell food that is prepackaged or in to-go containers to encourage offsite eating, when possible.
- Have designated areas for food and beverage consumption to reduce the amount of areas attendees need to remove their face coverings.

Additional Recommendations:

Employee/Volunteer Health:

- Pre-screen employees and event volunteers for symptoms prior to starting their shift.
- Do NOT allow symptomatic people to work. Send them home if they arrive at work sick.
- Require staff to wear a mask or face covering.
- Provide the opportunity for staff to wash hands often (or provide hand sanitizer).
- Encourage all staff to cover coughs and sneezes using their elbow (not hands).
- Practice social distancing by setting up workstations at least 6 feet from other staff.
- Discourage staff from hugging, shaking hands, etc. of clients.

Communication:

- Clearly and quickly inform your attendees, vendors and broader community of any festival/event policy changes.
- Post signage at entries, exits and restrooms informing attendees of ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19:
 - Cough or sneeze into your arm—do not cover mouth or face with your hands.
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - Do not high-five or shake hands.
- Post signage at entries, exits and restrooms to encourage frequent handwashing.
- Post signage reminding individuals to practice physical distancing of 6 feet or more.

- Post signage and communicate through other networks that attendees and vendors should NOT attend the festival/event if they feel sick or have come into contact with someone who feels or has felt sick.

Disinfection:

- Have cleaning materials available for festival staff and vendors to sanitize commonly touched surfaces.
- Ensure restrooms are cleaned regularly and stocked with soap and single service towels.
- Routinely clean portable restrooms. Provide a portable hand wash station in close proximity to the portable restrooms and, if not possible, regularly stock portable restroom with hand sanitizer.

After attending an event, you should:

- Monitor for [signs and symptoms](#) of illness for 14 days.
- Continue to follow physical distancing.
- Wear a face covering in the presence of others.
- Reach out to WCHD with questions or concerns at health@co.winnebago.wi.us or 920-232-3000.

Additional Resources:

- [DHS Decision Tool](#): helps individuals and families considering an activity or gathering think through how their decisions might impact others, what they can do to reduce risk, and if there are activities to do instead.
- [CDC guidance](#) for individuals attending an event or gathering
- [CDC considerations](#) for holding a gathering or community event