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Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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## WINNEBAGO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH REAFFIRMS ADVISORY REGARDING FACE COVERINGS

(Winnebago County, Wis.)—Winnebago County Health Department is re-issuing a Health Advisory which stipulates that everyone age five (5) and older should wear a face covering or mask when in any enclosed building where other people, except for members of the person's own household or living unit, could be present, and when social distancing of six (6) feet or more cannot be maintained or guaranteed. The City of Oshkosh has a mask mandate in effect. This advisory applies to all other areas of Winnebago County Health Department's jurisdiction.

"The State Supreme Court ruling today was about the Governor's authority, not the need for a masking mandate. It is still critical to wear a mask to reduce the spread of COVID-19, an illness that in Wisconsin already cut short at least 6,622 lives and resulted in at least 27,598 hospitalizations," said Doug Gieryn, Winnebago County Public Health Officer. "It's important to continue to follow masking, social distancing, and hand washing recommendations, since we are starting to see variants in Northeast Wisconsin and want to prevent a surge of COVID-19 cases from spring break, the Easter holiday and the more casual attitudes about group gatherings now that vaccination is underway. Stay the course with masking and get tested if you have traveled, are ill, or otherwise feel you have been exposed, and get your vaccine. No one wants to be the person that infected someone else. The sooner we vaccinate our community, the sooner we will be able to return to more normal activities. Vaccinations over the next two months will get us to a much better place."

Per the advisory, people should wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth when in public, including in businesses, health care settings, when waiting in line, and on public transportation. The advisory also indicates that individuals are to wear face coverings when in someone else's home when you are not of the same family group, especially if you are not vaccinated.

Exceptions are made for certain activities such as eating at a restaurant, but during those activities, 6 feet distancing of individuals not from the same household or living unit should always be followed. Some people may be exempted if they have a physical, mental, or developmental condition that prevents them from wearing a mask.

If someone is unable to wear a mask or face covering in a business due to a condition or disability, people should ask that business for reasonable accommodation, like a curbside pickup or a delivery option. Children ages 2 through 4 are highly encouraged to wear masks in public, and children age 5 and older are advised to wear masks. If your child is not able to wear a mask, then you should only bring them to places where it is necessary, so your child does not get or spread COVID-19 to others.

People can cover their faces a variety of ways to comply with this advisory:

- Masks can be either manufactured or homemade.
- Masks can be reusable or disposable.
- Masks can have inner filter pockets.
- Clear masks or cloth masks with a clear plastic panel may be used to facilitate communication with people who are hearing impaired or others who need to see a speaker's mouth to understand speech.
- Medical masks and N-95 respirators fulfill the requirements of the Order.

The following does not meet the advisory:

- Masks worn in a way that does not cover both the mouth and nose
- Face shields or goggles (face shields or goggles may be worn to supplement a mask that meets above required attributes)
- Scarves, ski masks, balaclavas, or bandanas
- Shirt or sweater collars (e.g., turtleneck collars) pulled up over the mouth and nose.
- Masks made from loosely woven fabric or that are knitted, i.e., fabrics that let light pass through
- Masks made from materials that are hard to breathe through (such as vinyl, plastic, or leather)
- Masks containing slits, exhalation valves, or punctures
- Masks that do not fit properly (large gaps, too loose or too tight)

In addition to wearing a mask, these actions will help protect both you and others from COVID-19:

- **Get vaccinated as soon as you are eligible.** Make sure to complete vaccination series to be considered fully vaccinated two weeks after your final dose. Visit [www.wcvaccine.org](http://www.wcvaccine.org) for more information.
- **Stay home if you are sick or feel off.**
- **Stay home if you do not need to go out.** Working from home, virtual gatherings, and using curbside or delivery ordering are still the safest and best options to protect yourself and others.
- **Regularly wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, and/or use hand sanitizer.**
- **Stay 6 feet away from other people.** Respiratory droplets are expelled into the air when other people cough, sneeze, talk and breathe. Staying 6 feet from others will lower the chances of you encountering the virus from those droplets.
- **Assume you have encountered COVID-19 if you go out.** Watch for symptoms like fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. If you have these symptoms, call your doctor and get tested.

**This advisory should not be used as justification to harass or harm another person who is either wearing or not wearing a face covering. Individuals may have disabilities or other conditions that prohibit them from wearing masks.**

Thank you for your commitment to keeping our community safe as we navigate these coming months. This advisory remains in effect until further notice.

Dated this 31<sup>st</sup> day of March 2021.

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