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Winnebago County COVID-19 Face Coverings Advisory

Updated 7/22/20

Winnebago County has worked hard to control the spread of COVID-19 thus far, but COVID-19 has not gone away and the virus is still a significant threat to our community. This is a critical time to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and maintain a level of transmission that is manageable by our healthcare and public health systems. The [CDC estimates](#) that 40% of all COVID-19 infections are people who are asymptomatic, meaning they do not have any symptoms, but they can still transmit the virus to others. [Evidence shows](#) cloth face coverings help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others. **The efforts we all take now will determine how well the virus continues to be contained.**

The Winnebago County Health Department issues the following advisory to control the transmission of COVID-19 throughout our communities, effective immediately.

Per [CDC guidance](#), all people 2 years of age and older should wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth when:

- Inside public enclosed spaces, including businesses, healthcare settings, workplaces, waiting in line, and on public transportation
- Outdoors if physical distancing of six (6) feet cannot be maintained where people who do not live in the same household are present
- Gathering with individuals who do not live in the same household, especially when physical distancing of six (6) feet cannot be maintained

Individuals may occasionally need to remove a face covering:

- While eating or drinking
- When communicating with an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing and communication cannot be achieved through other means
- While obtaining a service that requires the temporary removal of the face covering
- When necessary to confirm the individual's identity
- When federal or state law prohibits wearing a face covering

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:

- Babies or children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance
- Anyone who has a physical, mental, or developmental condition that prevents them from wearing a face covering
- Anyone in a situation that could lead to a medical emergency or introduce significant safety concerns from wearing a cloth face covering, such as engaging in water activities, high intensity activities or work settings where face covering may increase the chance of heat-related illness or introduce a hazard.

People should assume others have valid reasons for not wearing a face covering. While the majority of people are able to wear cloth face coverings, some people may not be able to due to a medical condition, mental condition, or disability. Additionally, some people of color in the U.S. have experienced harassment and racism due to wearing a face covering in public. This recommendation should not be used as a justification to harass or harm another person who is either wearing or not wearing a face covering.

Please visit the CDC's webpage for more information on face coverings:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

General Guidance for Everyone

- Stay home if you are sick and seek appropriate medical care.
- Practice physical distancing and protective measures, including the following:
 - Maintain physical distancing of six (6) feet or more between people not residing in a single living unit or household;
 - Minimize time spent with anyone outside your immediate household;
 - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol;
 - Cover coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands) and then handwash or sanitize;
 - Regularly disinfect high-touch surfaces and objects;
 - Avoid handshaking and hugging;
 - Avoid touching your face;
 - Use a mask or cloth face covering in public, at gatherings, workplaces, and where it is difficult to maintain physical distancing;
 - Limit travel to reduce the potential for virus transmission;
 - Monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19; if you develop symptoms, stay home and call your healthcare provider;
 - Follow all other public health recommendations issued by the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Winnebago County Health Department, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Winnebago County Health Department recognizes this situation will continue to evolve and may require future recommendations to protect the public's health and safety. In making those decisions, the Winnebago County Health Department will be guided by the following principles:

- Protecting public health and safety are our primary responsibility.
- Continuation and resumption of business and personal activity is essential to the well-being of our community.
- Scientific data and local information must guide our public health decision-making.
- Any recommendations issued will strive to avoid inequity amongst the individuals, businesses, and communities impacted.
- Gathering perspectives from local stakeholders is valuable.
- We trust that residents and businesses will follow recommendations and guidance from Public Health authorities to protect each other.

Please see the Winnebago County Health Department website at <https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/health> for the most up-to-date guidance and resources.

Thank you for your commitment to keeping our communities safe as we navigate these coming months. Your efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 are greatly appreciated by those who live, work, and play in Winnebago County.