



## Washburn County Health Department

Washburn County Health and Human Services Department  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Cheri Nickell, Washburn County Health Officer

### **WASHBURN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT COVID-19 ADVISORY #4 FACE COVERINGS**

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. §252.03 (1) & (2), the Washburn County Public Health Officer has issued an advisory addressing use of face coverings due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and continued spread of the COVID-19 virus in Wisconsin and across the Nation:

1. On March 17, 2020, the Washburn County Board of Supervisors issued a countywide COVID-19 Emergency Declaration.
2. On July 15, 2020, the COVID-19 Activity Level for Washburn County was raised from **LOW** to **MEDIUM**. Activity level is based on current burden, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 in the last two weeks, and trajectory, the percent change in number of confirmed cases in the last two weeks. View the current activity level by county and region at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/local.htm>.
3. Washburn County has a large population of older adults and other high-risk individuals. These populations are at the highest risk of COVID-19; it is our priority to keep people in Washburn County healthy and safe.
4. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) recommend that individuals wear cloth face coverings when they are in a public setting where they cannot reliably maintain six feet of distance from others at all times.
5. Due to continued community transmission of COVID-19 throughout our Region, the State, and across the Nation, the Health Department recognizes that prevention of COVID-19 in Washburn County is a shared responsibility between individuals, businesses, and community agents. As such, Washburn County is now advising all residents wear face coverings when in public.
6. The Health Department recommends the following for **FACE COVERINGS**:
  - i. Every individual in Washburn County should wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth when:
    - a. In any enclosed building where other people, except for members of the person's own household or living unit, could be present.
    - b. In line to enter any indoor space.
    - c. Driving or riding on public transportation or in any for hire vehicle.
  - ii. Individuals may remove their face coverings under the following circumstances:
    - a. While eating or drinking.

- b. When communicating with an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing and communication cannot be achieved through other means.
  - c. While obtaining a service that requires the temporary removal of the face covering.
  - d. When necessary to confirm the individual's identity.
  - e. When federal or state law prohibits wearing a face covering.
- iii. The following individuals are **EXEMPT** from this advisory to wear a face covering:
- a. Children aged two years old and under.
  - b. Individuals for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by government safety guidelines.
  - c. Individuals with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents them from wearing a face covering.
  - d. Individuals who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
- iv. If children are unable to wear a face covering, parents and guardians are advised to only bring them to places where it is necessary they be.
- v. Acceptable face coverings include:
- a. Bandana, scarf, or neck gaiter that covers the nose and mouth.
  - b. Homemade cloth face mask made either by sewing or a no-sew method.
  - c. Examples and instructions for making face coverings can be found at:  
<https://www.co.washburn.wi.us/news/public-health/cloth-face-coverings>
- vi. Members of the general public **SHOULD NOT** seek medical-grade surgical masks or N95 respirators to comply with this advisory. Medical-grade masks should be reserved for frontline health care staff and first responders.
7. This is an ever-changing and very serious health situation and Washburn County needs to be diligent in its response.
8. This advisory provides recommendations and does not provide for enforcement via civil or criminal penalty. The Washburn County Health Department entrusts compliance of these recommendations to the public in the interest of protecting our businesses, residents, and visitors during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

For up-to-date information regarding COVID-19, follow the resources below:

**Washburn County's COVID-19 page:** <https://www.co.washburn.wi.us/news/public-health/Coronavirus-Outbreak>

**Washburn County Health. Dept. Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/WashburnCoHealthDept/>

**Resources for residents, businesses, and families:** <https://www.co.washburn.wi.us/news/emergency-management/COVID-19>

Questions and concerns can be directed to the Washburn County Health Department at 715-635-4400 or via email to [health@co.washburn.wi.us](mailto:health@co.washburn.wi.us)

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