

UW Health: Urges caution on large gatherings, even outdoors

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MADISON, Wis. – This Monday is the start of the Democratic National Convention. Before the pandemic, this event would have drawn tens of thousands of people to Milwaukee for an entire week of parties and rallies. COVID-19 moved that convention out of Milwaukee and turned it into a virtual-only event, as is the case for the upcoming Republican Convention. Other heavily attended events like Big 10 football and Summerfest have been postponed or cancelled as well.

Large gatherings, even outside, remain a major concern for health officials when it comes to containing COVID-19 infections. UW Health officials want to remind the public that the larger and more compact the gathering, the higher the risk of spreading or becoming infected with COVID-19.

Very few activities are risk free right now, but some activities are more dangerous and less necessary than others. Tips to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection:

- Keep gatherings small.
- If indoors, wear a mask and practice physical distancing.
- For small, outdoor gatherings, be sure to continue physical distancing, and practicing good hand hygiene.

According to the CDC, COVID-19 spreads between people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets. This means activities where people are close to each other for long periods and talking, laughing, eating or

drinking, singing, coughing or sneezing, become increasingly dangerous. They are even more risky when indoors and when participants don't wear a mask. Event like concerts, parties, festivals, rallies, conventions and sporting events present a high risk and should be rescheduled or reconsidered if participants aren't able to practice physical distancing or wear a mask.

While it's tough to see these major events cancelled, postponed or re-imagined, that is an important step toward ending this pandemic and allowing us to resume many of the events we have traditionally enjoyed.

UW Health officials are available for interviews.