

Public Health Madison and Dane County: New public health order issued for Dane County requiring face coverings indoors

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Effective on Thursday, August 19, 2021 at 12:01am, Public Health Madison & Dane County is issuing [Face Covering Emergency Order](#), which requires that everyone age 2 and older wear a face covering or mask when in in any enclosed building where other people, except for members of the person's own household or living unit, could be present. This requirement applies to all of Dane County.

"We still believe vaccines are our best tool to protect our community," said Janel Heinrich, Director of Public Health Madison & Dane County. "But as cases continue to increase, requiring face coverings is an easy added layer of protection to further help keep people safe, including our youngest children not yet eligible to be vaccinated."

On July 27, Public Health issued [a mask advisory](#), strongly encouraging everyone, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask indoors in response to [updated CDC guidance](#) regarding use of masks. On July 19, our 7-day average number of cases was 19, and on August 12, the 7-day average increased by 382% to 91.6.

"Public Health has updated policies and recommendations throughout the pandemic based on current local conditions and the latest scientific data," said City of Madison Mayor, Satya Rhodes-Conway. "As virus spread is fueled by the prevalence of the delta variant, it is clear that we need to use all of our tools to keep our community safe; and that means getting vaccinated and wearing masks."

The delta variant is a naturally occurring mutation of the SARS CoV-2 virus, the virus that causes COVID-19. Data show that the delta variant is more contagious and spreads more easily than the original COVID-19 virus, including among people that are vaccinated. Public Health also strongly recommends wearing a face covering at private gatherings or crowded outdoor settings.

“With our kids heading back to school and hospitals in other parts of the country overwhelmed with COVID-19 cases, moving from a mask recommendation to a requirement is a common sense step to prevent disease spread and protect the kids in our community who can’t get vaccinated yet,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi.

Public Health asks that businesses post signs reminding customers and staff of the face covering requirement. The order will be in effect until September 16, 2021 at 12:01 a.m. View [Face Covering Emergency Order](#) for additional information.

As more contagious variants continue circulating in Dane County, [getting your vaccine](#) is more important now than ever. The vaccines provide good protection against severe outcomes and the sooner people get vaccinated against COVID-19, the less opportunity we give the virus to continue mutating.

“Vaccination continues to be our best path out of the pandemic,” said Jerry Halverson, MD, Chair of the Board of Health. “As variants create new challenges for our county moving forward, now is the time we must bring it home and get vaccinated.”

For more information about the COVID-19 in Dane County and the latest public health order, visit publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus. You can also follow @publichealthmdc on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).