

Dept. of Health Services: Rise in COVID-19 cases calls for increased precautions to protect health statewide

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As the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) continues to monitor an increase in the spread and impact of COVID-19 across the state, DHS recommends that Wisconsinites know their COVID-19 Community Level and increase take additional precautions against COVID-19 to protect health and save lives.

“Although the virus continues to change, we have the tools to fight it thanks to effective vaccines, accessible testing, and new treatments,” said Karen Timberlake, DHS Secretary-designee. “As cases increase statewide, all Wisconsinites have an essential role to play in keeping ourselves and our communities healthy and protecting those around us, especially those who are at high-risk for severe illness.”

DHS continues to track the impact of COVID-19 using CDC’s COVID-19 Community Levels, which are based on the number of new cases and hospital capacity. As of May 12, 2022, CDC [data indicate](#) seven Wisconsin counties have moved into the high COVID-19 Community Level category, 38 Wisconsin counties are experiencing a medium COVID-19 Community Level, and 27 are experiencing a low COVID-19 Community Level. **Residents in counties with a high COVID-19 Community Level are recommended to wear a well-fitting mask or respirator in public indoor settings, regardless of vaccination status.**

In addition, DHS urges all Wisconsinites to take the following actions:

- **Know the [COVID-19 Community Level](#)** where you live or are traveling to

and follow the associated guidelines.

- **Stay up to date**([link is external](#)) **on COVID-19 vaccines** by getting all recommended vaccines and booster doses.
- **Get tested for COVID-19** if you have symptoms or were exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- **Stay home if you are [sick or test positive for COVID-19](#)**, and talk to a health care provider or visit a community clinic to ask about available treatments.

People who have symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 should continue to follow [isolation and quarantine\(link is external\)](#) recommendations. Wearing a well-fitting mask or respirator also further reduces the risk of getting sick.

“As we see an increase in cases, we urge Wisconsinites to help us prevent severe illness by following these simple actions,” said Traci DeSalvo, Director of the DHS Bureau of Communicable Diseases. “The most important thing you can do today to protect yourself and your community is to be sure you are up to date on all COVID-19 vaccines, including recommended booster and additional doses. The more people who are vaccinated means more people are protected against severe health outcomes associated with COVID-19. This reduces strain on hospitals, slows the spread of disease, and saves lives.”

Visit [COVID.gov\(link is external\)](#) to find current safety recommendations for your community, as well as sites offering free testing, free vaccines, and locations that can fill prescriptions for COVID-19 therapeutics. For assistance finding a free or low-cost health care provider, call 211.

DHS will continue to actively monitor local COVID-19 Community Levels and provide public recommendations based on the current risk COVID-19 poses to Wisconsinites.

For up-to-date information about Wisconsin’s COVID-19 response, visit the [DHS COVID-19](#) webpage. We encourage you to follow @DHSWI on [Facebook\(link is external\)](#), [Twitter\(link is external\)](#), or dhs.wi on [Instagram\(link is external\)](#) for more information on COVID-19.