

Public Health Madison & Dane County: Dane County face covering order to expire March 1

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Effective at 12:00am on March 1, 2022, Public Health Madison & Dane County will no longer require face coverings in public indoor spaces in light of steadily decreasing COVID-19 case rates and hospitalizations.

The seven-day average of [cases](#) peaked on January 12 when 1,491 people were diagnosed with COVID-19. The seven-day average of hospitalizations peaked on January 15 with an average of 195 people hospitalized with COVID-19. Today, cases have fallen to a seven-day average of 340 cases, less than 25% of peak levels and are continuing to decline. Hospitalizations are also down substantially to a seven-day average of 110, which is 44% lower than the peak 7-day average of hospitalizations in January 2022 caused by Omicron.

Additionally, high case levels did not translate to as high of hospitalization levels as they did before vaccination was readily available. Currently, an estimated 58% of Dane County residents are [up to date](#) on their vaccines, meaning a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including [boosters](#), when eligible.

“Letting the face covering order expire doesn’t mean that the pandemic is over. Rather, it signals that we have made it through the Omicron surge and are entering a new stage of the pandemic,” said Janel Heinrich, Director of Public Health Madison & Dane County. “The most important thing you can do now is to stay up-to-date on our vaccines as they have proven to be highly effective in protecting you from becoming severely ill, ending up in the hospital, or dying from COVID-19.”

[Vaccines](#) are safe, free, and widely available throughout Dane County, including the

community vaccination clinic at the [Alliant Energy Center](#), recurring [mobile clinics](#), local pharmacies, or at your healthcare provider. Everyone ages 5 and older are now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, and many are eligible for boosters, with approval for children ages 6 months-4 years expected this Spring.

“As we move forward in this pandemic, community testing and vaccination options will remain readily available to those who need them, and people are encouraged to continue to wear masks if it makes them feel more comfortable,” said Satya Rhodes-Conway, City of Madison Mayor. “Wearing masks, especially [well-fitting masks](#) in indoor public settings, has been proven to reduce the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.”

Dane County’s public health order expiration does not affect the federal requirement for [face coverings on public transportation](#), including public transit networks, airplanes, buses and school buses, trains, taxis, Ubers and Lyfts.

“I want to thank everyone in the community for your commitment to keeping yourselves and your neighbors safe throughout the pandemic,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “It hasn’t been easy, that’s for sure; but your diligence, combined with the amazing work of Public Health and our many community partners, is the reason we have come through the pandemic with one of the lowest per-capita death rates in the nation. Thank you.”

Public Health will continue case investigation efforts to prevent spread and strongly encourages everyone to stay home when sick, and follow the latest isolation and quarantine guidance to prevent transmission, which can include masking recommendations.

“Together, healthcare workers and Public Health staff have worked tirelessly to meet the ever-changing demands of this pandemic by following the latest science and applying it to their response,” said Jerry Halverson, MD, Chair of the Board of Health. “This decision is no different. Now is the time we rely on folks to make good decisions when it comes to their own health, and the health of their neighbors.”

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