



WINNESHIK COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

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Winneshiek County Board of Health Position Statement

The Winneshiek County Board of Health **STRONGLY RECOMMENDS** that all Winneshiek County residents and visitors wear a cloth face mask or face covering when in public and maintain a six (6) foot distance from others. The Winneshiek County Board of Health asks everyone to recognize and understand that wearing a face mask or face covering and physical distancing protects others. The Board of Health's job is to protect the health of all and prevent the spread of disease within our county.

The coronavirus that causes SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) is easily transmitted, especially in group settings. It is essential that the spread of the virus be slowed to protect the ability of public and private health care providers to handle the influx of new patients and safeguard the public health and safety. Some individuals who contract COVID-19 will have no symptoms or have only mild symptoms, which means they may not be aware they carry the virus. Because even people without symptoms can transmit the disease, and because evidence shows the disease is easily spread, gatherings can result in preventable transmission of the virus. The scientific evidence shows that during this pandemic, it is essential to slow virus transmission as much as possible to protect the most vulnerable and to prevent the health care system from being overwhelmed.

When used correctly, important mitigation strategies such as cloth face coverings, are important to help slow the spread of COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people wear cloth face coverings in public settings and when around people who live outside of their household. The use of cloth face coverings is especially important when social distancing is difficult to maintain. Cloth face coverings are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the cloth face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected and may provide some measure of protection for the wearer themselves.

We need to come together as a community to ensure our healthcare organizations are able to continue to provide the quality care our community needs. We know the upward trend in positive cases will continue without the use of face coverings. The use of face coverings will diminish the strain on the medical community.

Wearing face coverings is one way we can help to keep our local businesses open. As our schools and colleges begin to re-open, the best way to keep everyone healthy and to reduce community spread in Winneshiek County is to encourage everyone to wear face coverings when others are around. **Please stay home if you do not feel well.**

We are blessed to live in a beautiful and vibrant county with a tradition of neighbors helping each other. We need to help each other now. We ask our residents and visitors to wear face coverings when out in public and to practice social distancing. Wearing face coverings protects you, those around you, and the community.