

COVID 19: March 19th, 2020 UPDATE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WI DHS) and the North Shore Health Department (NSHD), along with other local health departments are responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus, COVID-19. For the most current information on the COVID-19, please visit the [CDC's website on COVID-19](#) or www.nshealthdept.org.

Cases in Wisconsin are on the rise: As of March 19th, 2020, Wisconsin has 155 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 62 being in Milwaukee County and a sizable number of these from communities in the North Shore area. To demonstrate how quickly this disease is moving through our community, Milwaukee County reported its first case on Friday, March 13th. There is now substantial evidence of community spread in Milwaukee, Dane and Kenosha counties. This means that there are people who have tested positive, and it is unknown what their exposures have been. They have had no exposures to a known case and have not traveled to a location where there is community transmission.

Officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have arrived in the North Shore: CDC Officials are basing themselves out of our North Shore offices to help with the COVID-19 response in southeast Wisconsin as part of everyone's efforts to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus in our community.

Playgrounds throughout the North Shore area are closed: Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the playgrounds throughout the North Shore are closed. Playground equipment should not be used until further notice. This is to slow the spread of the virus and preserve the health of our community. Additionally, gatherings such as playdates, sleepovers, parties, large family dinners, visitors in your home, and non-essential workers in your house should be avoided. Practicing social distancing is essential to slow the spread of the virus, as is washing your hands and disinfecting surfaces frequently. Thank you for your cooperation and your efforts to stop the spread.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) under the direction of Governor Evers has prohibited public gatherings of 10 or more people: This restricts restaurants and bars throughout the state from having any indoor seating. Take-out, including drive-thru services, and delivery services are still permitted. Social distancing should be practiced by maintaining six feet between customers during pick-up. The press release can be found [here](#). The emergency order can be found [here](#). Some spaces are exempt from this ban. See the list [here](#) along with answers to other FAQs.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) released clarification on the 10 or more people restriction for restaurants: Restaurants and bars have been directed to end dine in service and only provide take-out or delivery. No seating may be provided, and food may not be consumed at the restaurant. Online and phone orders can be picked up and paid for in

person at your establishment provided the social distancing requirements are met. Orders can also be made onsite, limiting the total number of customers in the restaurant at a time to a maximum of 10, if a social distancing of 6 feet between customers can be maintained during order, payment and pickup.

The Wisconsin DHS released an order for restrictions on childcare facilities on March 18th: Childcare facilities are being asked to limit their staff to 10 people at one time and allow a maximum of 50 children to be present at any given time. Click [here](#) for the full order.

NSHD is NOT currently providing testing for COVID-19: If you are experiencing severe symptoms or need medical assistance, contact your physician. They are in charge of deciding who should be tested and will base their decision off of priority criteria released by the WI DHS on March 17th. Doctors have been directed to use a tiered system to decide who should be tested. Details on this can be found [here](#). Hospitalized patients are the priority for testing.

Receiving a negative test result does not mean you do not have the disease. If you were exposed within a few days of testing, you could still develop the disease even with a negative test result at an earlier date. Additionally, no treatment is available upon a positive result. Staying home and following self-isolation and self-monitoring guidelines is the best course of action. Visit the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) [website](#) for more guidance.

If you are experiencing mild upper respiratory symptoms, *testing is not recommended*. Assume you have disease, or another disease that is transmissible, and practice precautionary measures (recently updated by DHS): self-isolate in your home and self-monitor your symptoms. It is recommended that this isolation period end when:

1. At least **7 days** have passed since symptoms first appeared
- AND**
2. At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of medication **AND** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)

NSHD is providing local public health support through a variety of channels:

- **Surveillance:** We are monitoring cases through multiple websites including WI DHS, CDC and Johns Hopkins.
- **Investigations:** We will respond to notifications of positive and pending cases in the North Shore and initiate contact investigations with confirmed cases.
- **Containment:** NSHD uses federal and state guidelines to assess risk of exposure to COVID-19 and determine need for quarantine and monitoring.
- **Mitigation:** NSHD has been working with school districts to support their decisions to close for four weeks from March 16th until April 16th. NSHD supports the four-week closure to allow teachers time to prepare distance and virtual

learning opportunities, encompass spring break and allow a 14-day, post spring break travel quarantine for staff and students who may have traveled to communities with COVID-19 spread. After 14 days individuals who have travelled over spring break will have passed the 14-day quarantine time frame. The four-week recommendation will be reassessed based on the impact of COVID-19 in our communities.

- **Communication:** For the most current information on COVID-19, please visit the [CDC's website on COVID-19](#) or [WI DHS's website on COVID-19 website](#). Any new case announcements will be made as part of Milwaukee County's daily press briefings.

Additional information about COVID-19 is on our website at www.nshealthdept.org. If you are concerned about your risk of getting COVID-19 or have recently traveled to an affected area or had contact with a confirmed positive case, please contact the North Shore Health Department at 414-371-2980.