

COVID 19: March 24th, 2020 UPDATE
(as of 4:30 pm)

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 or www.nshealthdept.org.

COVID-19 Cases in Wisconsin: As of March 24th, 2020, Wisconsin has 457 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 219 being in Milwaukee County. The number of cases by county can be found here: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/outbreaks/index.htm>.

There is evidence of community spread in Milwaukee, Brown, Columbia, Dane, Fond du Lac, Kenosha, Walworth and Waukesha 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. The most effective measure to prevent further spread is to stay home, especially if you are ill. If you think you may have exposed or are ill and have an underlying health condition or need medical care, contact your healthcare provider.

On Tuesday, March 24th Governor Tony Evers directed Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-designee Andrea Palm to issue a Safer at Home order:

The Safer at Home order prohibits all nonessential travel and closes non-essential businesses across Wisconsin. The order is available [here](#) and the press release can be found [here](#). The order will go into effect at 8 am on Weds., March 25, 2020 and will remain in effect until 8 am Fri., April 24, 2020, or until a superseding order is issued. Governor Evers stresses the importance of staying home to flatten the curve and minimize the burden on the healthcare system. Many people who have the virus display no signs or symptoms and unknowingly spread it to others. This Safer at Home order is necessary to prevent transmission of the virus by these people who appear healthy.

The order does not require that individuals need special permission to leave their homes, but they must comply with the order as to when it is permissible to leave home. Similarly, if a business is an Essential Business or Operation as defined in the order, it does not need documentation or certification to continue its work that is done in compliance with this order.

Under this order, Wisconsin residents are able to:

- Perform tasks essential to maintain health and safety, such as obtaining medicine or seeing a doctor;
- Get necessary services or supplies for themselves or their family or household members, such as getting food and supplies, pet food and supplies necessary for staying at home;
- Care for a family member in another household; and
- Care for older adults, minors, dependents, people with disabilities or other vulnerable persons.

Businesses allowed to operate under the Safer at Home order include, but are not limited to:

- Health care operations, including home health workers;
- Critical infrastructure;
- Businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise vulnerable individuals;
- Fresh and non-perishable food retailers, including convenience stores, grocery stores, farmers' markets, and food banks;
- Businesses that ship or deliver groceries, food and goods directly to residences;
- Pharmacies, health care supply stores and health care facilities;
- Child care facilities, with some limitations;
- Gas stations and auto repair facilities;
- Banks;
- Laundry businesses, dry cleaners and services necessary for maintaining the safety, sanitation and essential operation of a residence, including garbage collection;
- Hardware stores, plumbers, and electricians;
- Educational institutions, for the purposes of facilitating distance learning;
- Roles required for any business to maintain minimum basic operations, which includes security, and payroll; and
- Law and safety, and essential government functions will continue under the recommended action.

The public should follow simple steps to prevent illness and avoid exposure to this virus including:

- Avoid social gatherings with people of all ages (including playdates and sleepovers, parties, large family dinners, visitors in your home, non-essential workers in your house);
- Frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water;
- Covering coughs and sneezes;
- Avoiding touching your face; and
- Staying home.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and we encourage you to frequently monitor the [DHS website for updates](#), as well as the [NSHD website](#). Additional information on COVID-19 can be found on the [CDC website](#).