



Mason County Public Health

COVID-19 Information Release

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To the Mason County communities,

Over the last four weeks, we have experienced major changes in our daily lives and routines as we protect our communities from the spread of COVID-19. While change is often difficult, our efforts are beginning to show positive outcomes as the number of new cases is decreasing and many of those who have been infected are recovering at home. Of Mason County's 21 positive cases of COVID-19, 10 are no longer in isolation and their immediate families have finished their quarantine phase.

We recognize that this is a challenging time. Many of us personally know individuals who have been infected with this virus. Some loved ones have sadly lost their lives. Many people are now required to limit socializing and have lost income and stability. Without a specific treatment or a vaccine, returning to "normal" life too quickly and without continued distancing practices may lead to a second wave of the epidemic. In order to prevent a recurrence, we will need a robust increase in testing, continued rapid contact tracing and focused quarantine and isolation strategies.

As we begin our recovery phase, restrictions will be lifted gradually. I expect we will continue to recommend working from home if possible, social distancing, proper handwashing, and wearing a cloth face mask when out in public. Following these guidelines has been working, and we will need to continue to practice them to prevent the virus from being reintroduced into our community.

Not everyone who is infected with COVID-19 will have symptoms. It is possible you can infect others even if you do not feel sick, and others can infect you even if they do not appear to be sick. Wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth can protect yourself and others from becoming infected when you are not able to practice social distancing. Change your cloth mask daily and when it becomes wet or contaminated. Please reserve medical grade disposable masks for healthcare workers to use while taking care of COVID-19 infected patients.

Many have asked about where people with confirmed COVID-19 infections live. Confirmed positive cases live in communities across Mason County. There may also be many unconfirmed cases who do not know they are sick because they do not have symptoms. Limiting the places you go because you think someone who is infected has been there can give you a false sense of security from the virus. It is important to assume that anyone could be infected and continue to practice social distancing, hand hygiene, and wear a cloth mask when you leave your home.

Thank you for doing your part to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Mason County! We must continue to work together to protect ourselves and our loved ones so that our community can emerge as a healthier and stronger Mason County.

Daniel Stein, M.D., Mason County Health Officer