



Washburn County Health Department
Washburn County Health and Human Services Department
222 Oak St. Spooner, WI, 54801 | Phone: 715-635-4400
co.washburn.wi.us



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

06/18/2020

Contact: Cheri Nickell, Washburn County Health Officer

COVID-19: Fourth Confirmed Case in Washburn County – Asymptomatic Individual

Washburn County, WI – The Washburn County Health Department has confirmed the fourth case of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) in **an asymptomatic individual** in Washburn County. The individual is isolated at home and the Health Department is working on identifying and contacting any close contacts. This case was identified through asymptomatic testing for a hospital procedure, which is standard practice for all hospitals as part of COVID-19 safety protocols.

Asymptomatic testing is recommended by Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) primarily for pre-procedure patients, nursing home staff, and close contacts of positive cases. If these recommendations change, we will inform the community.

“A second confirmed case in an individual who was showing no symptoms reaffirms the need for everyone to wear face masks in public, practice social distancing, avoid large gatherings, and wash your hands frequently,” said Cheri Nickell, Washburn County Health Officer.

While scientists are still studying how COVID-19 spreads in individuals who are not showing symptoms, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 35% of infections occur in asymptomatic individuals and estimates that 40% of COVID-19 transmission occurs when individuals are pre-symptomatic, meaning after they are infected and before they start to feel sick. A growing number of studies have shown that asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission can be slowed by the use of face masks or coverings. Cloth face masks or coverings are used as a physical barrier between your nose/mouth and the air. This barrier stops respiratory droplets from entering the air when a person talks, sneezes, or coughs. Respiratory droplets are known to spread COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases.

While cloth face masks or coverings do not protect the wearer from contracting COVID-19, if everyone wears masks while in public then everyone will be protected. Wearing masks helps protect our local businesses and their employees, as well as the large proportion of high-risk individuals in Washburn County. Wearing a mask **DOES NOT** reduce your immune system’s function, increase carbon dioxide to a level that would be noticeable by the wearer, or mean that you do not need to continue social distancing and good hand hygiene.

With no medicine or vaccine to treat or prevent COVID-19, Washburn County residents can take these steps to reduce their risk:

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer if you cannot wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Dispose of the tissue after using, and then wash your hands.
- Practice social distancing of 6 feet or more
- Avoid large gatherings with individuals outside of your household, especially gatherings that are indoors.

Visit <https://www.co.washburn.wi.us/news/public-health/Coronavirus-Outbreak> for up-to-date information.

Questions can be directed to the Health Department at 715-635-4400 or by email to health@co.washburn.wi.us.