



**Washburn County Health Department**  
Washburn County Health and Human Services Department  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - 07/20/2020**  
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### **COVID-19: Contact Tracing Requires Cooperation**

Washburn County, WI – The Washburn County Health Department confirmed two additional cases of COVID-19 in Washburn County over the weekend. Both cases occurred in individuals exhibiting symptoms of the virus. Close contacts have been identified and notified for the first new case, confirmed Friday night. The Health Department is in the process of identifying and notifying contacts of the second new case, confirmed early Monday morning. At this time, the Health Department does not believe there to be a risk of community exposure related to these cases. The public will be notified via news release if a community exposure where all contacts cannot be identified is discovered during the course of the investigation.

Our total confirmed case count currently stands at **eight (8)** with **two (2)** active cases and **six (6)** recovered. Full case counts including currently monitoring and negative test results are released weekdays at 2:00 pm on the Washburn County Health Department Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/WashburnCoHealthDept/>

#### **Contact Tracing**

In order to effectively contain COVID-19 and prevent its spread in Washburn County, the Health Department needs cooperation as we conduct disease investigations and contact tracing. We understand there may be hesitation to share information about activities and close contacts for fear of judgement. The goal of the Health Department is to keep our community safe and healthy, not to pass judgement.

All information that is collected during contact tracing is confidential and protected by HIPAA (The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) in a secure database, WEDSS (Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System). Access to WEDSS is restricted to Health Department staff working on disease investigations and limited state epidemiologists. Contact tracers will never ask for your Social Security number or your financial information. We may ask to verify demographic information and we will ask about symptoms, places you have visited, and people you have recently had close contact with.

Effective contact tracing and our ability to notify the public of possible community exposure is dependent on the level of honesty provided by confirmed cases to the Health Department during the disease interview process. We can only go on the information we are provided. If you are contacted by the Health Department as part of a disease investigation or for contact tracing, help us help the community by answering our questions honestly.

#### **Washburn County businesses and residents should take the following steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19:**

- Physical distancing of at least 6 feet from people who do not live together.
- Use of cloth face coverings when in public places where physical distancing is difficult or impossible.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water, or sanitize with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are unavailable.
- If experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/symptoms.htm>), isolate yourself as much as possible and get tested.
- Businesses should follow the WEDC's guidelines for reopening (<https://wedc.org/reopen-guidelines/>)

Visit <https://www.co.washburn.wi.us/news/public-health/Coronavirus-Outbreak> for up-to-date information and Washburn County testing information by provider. Questions can be directed to the Health Department at 715-635-4400 or by email to [health@co.washburn.wi.us](mailto:health@co.washburn.wi.us).