



Iowa County Health Department

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CDC Updated Indicators (Including Masking Guidance) for Monitoring COVID-19 in Communities and Guiding the Implementation of Prevention Strategies *February 25, 2022*

CDC announced a major change in mask guidance with "Covid-19 community level" metrics. These metrics are now based on three pieces of data in a community: new Covid-19 hospitalizations, hospital capacity and new Covid-19 cases.

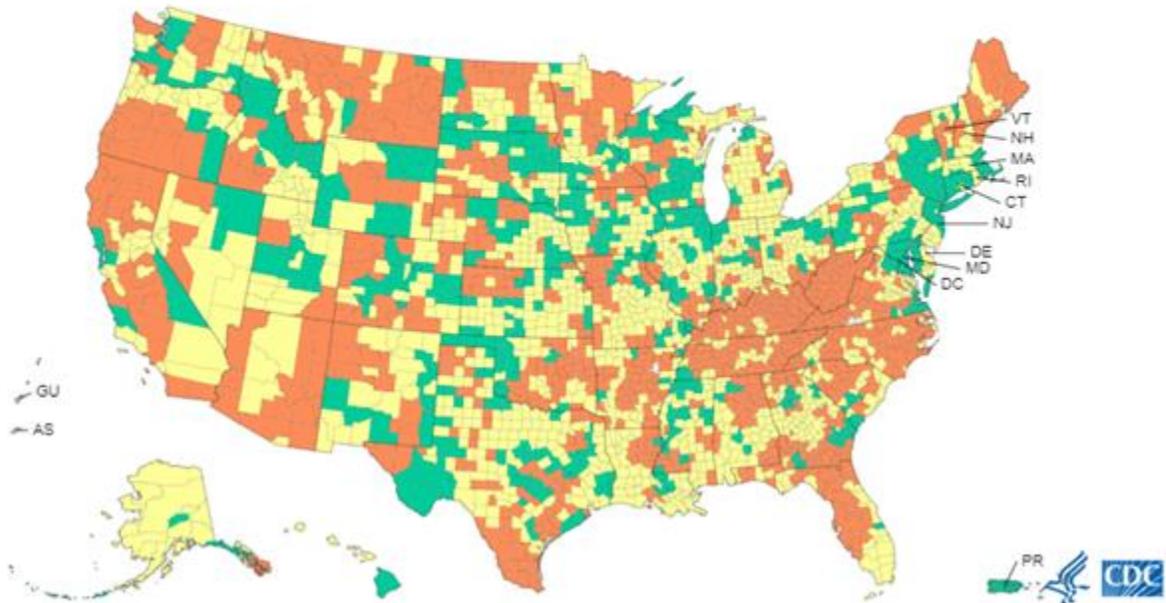
[Use and Care of Masks | CDC](#)

[COVID-19 Community Levels](#) are a tool to help communities decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest data. This new CDC guidance does not change current quarantine (if you are exposed) and isolation (if you test positive) guidance. The new Community Levels **do not** apply to health care settings, such as hospitals and nursing homes. Instead, health care settings should continue to use community transmission rates and continue to follow [CDC's infection prevention and control recommendations for healthcare guidance](#). *Note:* EMS is considered health care

Iowa County is designated with a LOW Community Burden level [COVID-19 by County | CDC](#)

U.S. COVID-19 Community Levels by County

Data provided by CDC
Updated: Feb. 24, 2022



What Prevention Steps Should You Take Based on Your COVID-19 Community Level?

Community Burden Levels		
Low	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines Get tested if you have symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are at high risk for severe illness, talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines Get tested if you have symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a mask indoors in public Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines Get tested if you have symptoms Additional precautions may be needed for people at high risk for severe illness
<p>People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.</p>		

If you are immunocompromised, learn more about [how to protect yourself](#).

“This change in CDC guidance doesn’t mean that the pandemic is over. Rather, it signals that we have made it through the Omicron surge and are entering a new stage of the pandemic,” said Debbie Siegenthaler, Director/Health Officer, Iowa County Health Department. “An important step we can all take to continue to move forward is to stay up-to-date on our vaccines as they have proven to be highly effective in protecting you from becoming severely ill, ending up in the hospital, or dying from COVID-19.” Siegenthaler added.

“Additionally, as we move forward in this pandemic, people are encouraged to continue to wear masks if it makes them feel more comfortable or if they are at high risk according the guidance. It is also strongly encouraged that residents stay home when sick, and follow the latest isolation and quarantine guidance to prevent transmission, which can include masking recommendations. Now is the time we rely on everyone to make good decisions when it comes to their own health, and the health of their neighbors.” Siegenthaler added

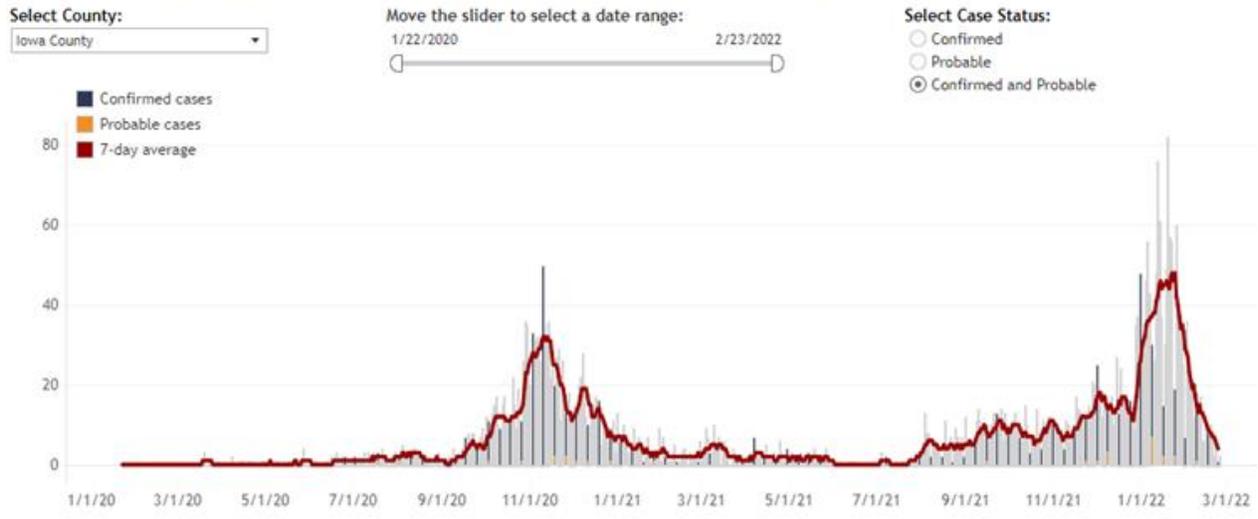
Iowa County continues the trend in decreasing newly reported COVID-19 cases (reported through a PCR lab test). Home antigen tests are not reported through the Health Department and as a result case counts do not include antigen positive tests. Iowa County [weekly snapshot](#)

Epi curve (next page) showing Iowa County case data over time [COVID-19: County Data | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#) as of 2/24/22. The **red line** is the seven day average which peaked in January and has significantly declined since.

Number of reported confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases by date of symptom onset or diagnosis: Iowa County

Updated: 2/24/2022 (Total: 5,147)

The most recent two weeks are preliminary and subject to change as more data are submitted (from 2/10/2022 to 2/24/2022)



Weekly Case Total -Iowa County [weekly snapshot](#)

Week of 10/11/21	56 positive cases
Week of 10/18/21	41
Week of 10/25/21	62
Week of 11/1/21	61
Week of 11/8/21	49
Week of 11/15/21	56
Week of 11/22/21	81
Week of 11/29/21	88
Week of 12/6/21	105
Week of 12/13/21	92
Week of 12/20/21	119
Week of 12/27/21	99
Week of 1/3/2022	181
Week of 1/10/2022	231
Week of 1/17/2022	324
Week of 1/24/2022	344
Week 1/26-2/1/22	154
Week 2/2-2/8/22	84
Week 2/9-2/15/22	63
Week 2/16-2/22/22	53

Total cumulative number of cases = 4,846 (2.22.22)

Note: The numbers include positive PCR test results reported via the Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS). Numbers do not include home antigen tests.

DASHBOARD UPDATE:

The Iowa County COVID-19 Dashboard update continues to show decreasing trends in disease incidence and impact. For the data period 2/9/22 to 2/22/22, the dashboard reports the percent of positive tests decreased to 8.2% (down from 10.9%) and the average new cases per day is 8 (down from 13). Local testing rate is green with an average of 101 tests performed daily (down from 122). Local health care partner's facility use status (represents med surge and ICU capacity) remains green. Staffing status remains yellow. Critical supply status remains green. Our regional health care infrastructure metric represents regional hospital bed use and remains yellow. Currently there are 84.2% (down from 86% last dashboard) of regional hospital beds in use. View hospital capacity data [COVID-19: Hospitals | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)

The entire Iowa County COVID-19 dashboard can be found at

<https://www.iowacounty.org/departments/COVID-19>.

Summary of metrics since July 2020 <https://www.iowacounty.org/departments/COVID-19/IowaCountySpecificData>.

The Iowa County Health Department wants to assure residents that if you test positive through a PCR test (through a lab), there is still a mechanism to assure each positive test result is relayed to each positive case. Instructions on what to do if you test positive are available at

<https://www.iowacounty.org/LatestGuidanceforIsolationandQuarantine>. The Iowa County Health Department is a resource for anyone unable to access the internet, those seeking further guidance or answers to specific questions. Please call us with any questions at 608.930.9870.

Mitigation Measures: Physical Distancing; Hand Hygiene, Cover Your Cough, Stay Home When Ill, and Cleaning and Disinfection Best Practice.

The benefit of physical distancing, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, staying home if ill and cleaning and disinfection are best practice regardless of vaccination status continues to be important in reducing disease transmission and keeping people healthy. The Iowa County Health Department encourages every citizen continue the maintenance of these practices. It is important to be aware and considerate of persons in our communities who cannot be vaccinated due to current ineligibility because of age or medical reason, or who may have a medical condition or an immune system that may not have mounted as strong of an immune response from the vaccine.

It is up to businesses or organizing entity to determine how to use this information in their operations being sure to research and understand the legal considerations and liability. Any entity that is organizing an event should check with their legal counsel and insurance company to be sure they are operating on a firm understanding of their liabilities. Likewise, any municipality that is issuing a license or permit for these types of events should check with their legal counsel and insurance company to be sure they are operating on a firm understanding of their liabilities. If an entity makes the determination to not follow current recommendations, that is their prerogative, but an outbreak attributed to that event may be the burden of the promoters. Furthermore, if an entity does decide to proceed with an event, how will the safety of participants be planned for, managed, enforced and assured?

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/participate-in-activities.html#print>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>