

## Community Health Education 2020

### Infectious Disease

Infectious disease will be the focus of Partners of WHA community health information for the next 2 years. Also known as “communicable disease”, infectious disease is defined as illnesses that result from the infection, presence, and growth of pathogenic biological agents (bacteria, viruses, fungi, Protozoa) in an individual human or other animal host. It is front and center with the COVID-19 pandemic we are currently experiencing. There are other infectious disease entities worth reporting on as they, too, effect the community today. These will be featured in future community health articles.

It can be “tiring”, hearing about the Coronavirus or COVID-19 day after day. However, the evidence tells us it will be around for a while longer. Each day, more and more new information comes to light leading to changes in recommendations on prevention, treatment, etc. This updated information can change the way we manage our health and daily activities, making it important to stay informed.



The State of Wisconsin has a COVID-19 initiative titled “You Stop the Spread”- do your part and protect what’s important to you to help protect everyone in Wisconsin. One such way to do this is mask wearing, the first line of defense in preventing the spread of the Coronavirus.

While being a protective covering, frequent wearing for extended periods of time can lead to skin irritation known as “maskne”, mask-related acne. A mask creates the perfect environment (warm, humid) for bacteria, yeast, and other flora to grow. This can result in small pimples and pustules to form around the nose and mouth. Flare-ups of rosacea can occur, too.

Skin care recommendations for mask wearing from the American Academy of Dermatology and the Cleveland Clinic include:

- Use of a good foaming cleanser to keep skin clean and calm. If more acne-prone, a product with salicylic acid may be beneficial. Washing occasionally with a dandruff shampoo containing selenium sulfide or ketoconazole can help remove any yeast build-up around the nose and mouth.
- Moisturizers: apply a light layer. Gel moisturizer for normal or combination skin; lotion for dry to very dry skin. Moisturizer with ceramides, hyaluronic acid, or dimethicone are recommended for dry skin.
- Use of sunblock containing zinc or titanium that can be a barrier to skin irritation.

- Make-up is okay, if non-comedogenic(non-pore clogging), and with a light application when wearing a regular mask.
- Lip protection using petroleum jelly to prevent chapped lips. Apply after washing your face, before wearing a mask, and at bedtime.
- Avoid trying new skin care products.
- Over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription products to treat cold sores. These are more likely to occur if you are prone to them.
- For the men with facial hair, wearing a mask for long periods of time: using a simple toner with alpha-hydroxy acid or witch hazel and completely drying the skin before reapplying the mask can be helpful.
- If you are under the care of a dermatologist, continue your prescribed treatment plan. Contact your dermatologist with questions or concerns.

Proper fit of the mask is very important to help keep your skin “in check” as well as being effective in preventing the spread of the virus. It should be snug yet comfortable and cover the nose, chin, and sides of the face. The use of soft, natural, and breathable fabric such as a cotton (especially on the inside of the mask) is best. Synthetic fabrics such as rayon, polyester, nylon should be avoided.

The loops and ties on masks worn can cause soreness around the ears. Daily changes in the type worn can help prevent the soreness. Also, when it’s safe to remove the mask, taking a 15 minute break every 4 hours can reduce the irritation.

Masks should be washed regularly (hot water is best) and placed in the dryer on high heat. An alternative method is hand-washing in soapy water, rinsing well, then drying. Do not reuse disposable masks.

There are some instances when individuals cannot wear a mask safely. Examples of this include:

- Children ages 2-5 years.
- Individuals who cannot take off a mask without help.
- Individuals who have trouble breathing, ie respiratory illness.
- Individuals with experience or fear of racial profiling.

With the holiday season upon us, it is of major importance to continue following CDC guidelines and best practices to keep everyone safe. **Besides mask wearing, please:**

1. Stay home if symptomatic and get tested.
2. Wash you hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When using hand sanitizer (hands should not be visibly soiled), the product should contain 60% alcohol.
3. Use social distancing- stay a minimum distance of 6’ away from others.
4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

5. Cover coughs and sneezes appropriately. If using tissue, dispose of properly and wash your hands promptly.
6. Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched.

Wisconsin COVID-19 statistics change daily which makes it challenging to provide you the most up-to-date information. For current data in Wisconsin, go to [dhs.wisconsin.gov](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov) and look under "COVID-19", "Wisconsin Summary".

Wishing you Happy Holidays and good health!

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Resources: Centers for Disease Control- [cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov)

Department of Health Services (Wisconsin)- [dhs.wisconsin.gov](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov)

Cleveland Clinic- [health.clevelandclinic.org](https://health.clevelandclinic.org)

American Academy of Dermatology- [aad.org](https://aad.org)