



RAYMOND F. PRZYBELSKI, DIRECTOR
(715) 345-5350 or Toll Free (866) 920-2525
FAX (715) 345-5966

RUTH GILFRY HUMAN RESOURCES BUILDING
817 WHITING AVENUE
STEVENS POINT, WI 54481-5292

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ccpublichealth@co.portage.wi.us

COMMUNITY SPREAD OF COVID-19

June 11, 2020

Stevens Point, WI—Portage County Health and Human Services-Division of Public Health is confirming community spread of COVID-19 in Portage County. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov), “community spread” means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

Recent increases in positive cases of COVID-19 in Portage County clearly demonstrate the presence of community spread. Community members can assume that anywhere they go in public, especially at establishments or events where physical distancing of 6 feet can’t be maintained and no safety precautions, such as wearing a face covering do not happen, they have a chance of becoming infected with COVID-19. There is greater risk of virus spread for individuals, not from the same household, who are within 6 feet or less with others for 15 minutes or longer.

To prevent COVID-19:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Avoid touching your face in public
- Stay home when sick
- Practice physical distancing of at least 6 feet from people not in your household
- Avoid large gatherings
- Avoid non-essential travel
- Wear a cloth face covering in situations where physical distancing can’t be maintained

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever and chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Fatigue and body/muscle aches
- Diarrhea, vomiting and nausea

To determine close contacts of a COVID-19 positive individual, the following questions are asked:

- Did you have direct physical contact with the person (e.g. hug, kiss, handshake)?
- Were you within 6 feet of the person for more than 15 minutes?
- Could the person have had contact with any of your respiratory secretions (e.g. coughed/sneezed on, contact with dirty tissue, sharing a drinking glass, food or towels or other personal items)?
- Did you stay overnight for at least one night in a household with the person (i.e. household contact)?

If you have been in close contact with someone who is a confirmed case of COVID-19, staff from your local health department or the state health department will be in touch to notify you of potential exposure. When they call you, you will be asked if you are experiencing symptoms. If you have symptoms, they will help you understand when to seek medical help, how to get tested, and options if you have concerns about being able to safely quarantine or isolate for the required time.

While vulnerable populations including the elderly and immunocompromised are at an increased risk for serious and life-threatening complications, anyone can develop symptoms or become seriously ill if infected with COVID-19. COVID-19 can be spread by asymptomatic people, meaning people who are not experiencing symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. This is why it's important to maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet from others who are not in your household and wear a cloth face covering when you are in public.

If you have questions, please call or email our department at (715) 345-5907 or PCPublicHealth@co.portage.wi.us.

If you have general COVID-19 questions call 2-1-1 or text your zip code to 898211 Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Could you be a close contact to someone who tested positive for COVID-19?



PORTAGE COUNTY
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Public Health

Did you have direct physical contact with the person?

If you hugged, kissed, or shook hands with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 when they were infectious, you are considered a close contact.



Were you within 6 feet of the person for more than 15 minutes?



Did you stay overnight for at least one night in a household with the person? Do you live with the person?



Could you have had contact with any of the person's respiratory secretions?

If you were coughed/sneezed on, touched a dirty tissue, shared a drinking glass, food, or towels or other personal items with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, you are considered a close contact.



COVID-19 can be prevented by:

- Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Covering your coughs and sneezes in public.
- Avoiding touching your face in public.
- Staying home when sick.
- Practicing physical distancing of at least 6 feet from people not in your household.
- Avoiding large gatherings and non-essential travel.
- Wearing a cloth face covering in situations where physical distancing can't be maintained.

Source • Wisconsin Department of Health Services & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov)

###

Where Government Serves the Community