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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**City of Menasha Reaches Substantial Level of Community Spread**

(Menasha, Wis.) – August 13, 2021. The City of Menasha has now reached the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) threshold for substantial level of COVID-19 community transmission and is experiencing a high burden of COVID-19 cases. The health department asks all community members do their part in order to prevent the further spread of the virus in Menasha. Layering mitigation strategies such as staying home when sick, masking, physical distancing, handwashing, and especially vaccination, reduces the risk of transmission.

“Our cases have been increasing since mid-July and continue to climb as the Delta variant spreads locally and in our state. The number one way to prevent the spread of the disease, and prevent the virus from continuing to mutate, is to get vaccinated,” said Kristine Hutter, Menasha Public Health Officer/Director. “Taking action to get vaccinated will minimize the impact of this virus and protect the most vulnerable, including children under 12 who cannot yet receive the vaccine and those whose immune response isn’t as strong.”

Vaccination remains the best tool to protect yourself and others against COVID-19. The vaccines are effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization and death from the virus including its variants. Vaccines are available in our area through local pharmacies, healthcare systems, local health departments, and other community clinics. Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) or [2-1-1 Wisconsin](https://www.2-1-1.wisconsin.gov) to find a vaccine provider near you. Those who are unsure about getting vaccinated should speak with their medical provider and get the facts about vaccination from medical resources they trust.

“Vaccines are free and currently available to everyone age 12 years and older. Community members are encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as possible,” said City of Menasha Mayor Don Merkes. “We all want this virus to end so we can return to our normal lifestyles. Getting vaccinated is the best way to get there,” added Merkes.

Given recent increases in COVID-19 cases through-out the country and the widely circulating, highly contagious Delta variant, the CDC has updated its [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0811-covid-19-guidance.html). The CDC calls for everyone in areas of substantial or high [community transmission](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0811-covid-19-guidance.html), including those already vaccinated, to wear a mask in indoor public settings and crowded outdoor venues. The updated guidance also recommends that vaccinated individuals who have had contact with someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 be tested 3-5 days after exposure. A mask should be worn in indoor public settings for 14 days after exposure or until a negative test result is received. Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should seek a test and isolate until test results are known.

The Menasha Health Department emphasizes the importance of getting vaccinated as soon as possible and recommends individuals follow the updated CDC guidance to mask up when indicated. Wearing a mask provides an extra layer of protection on top of vaccination. These are two key mitigation strategies we have to keep our community healthy and get back to doing the things we love safely.

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