

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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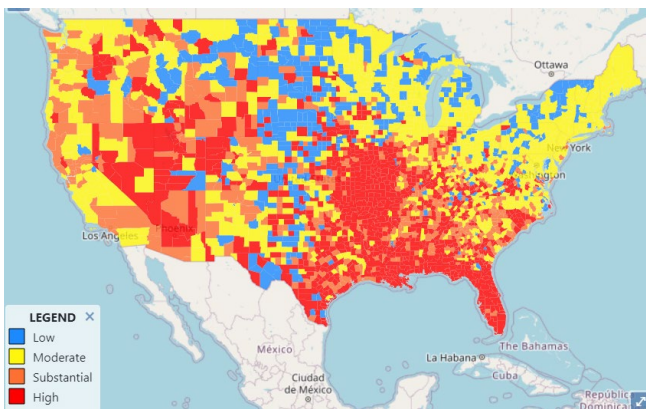
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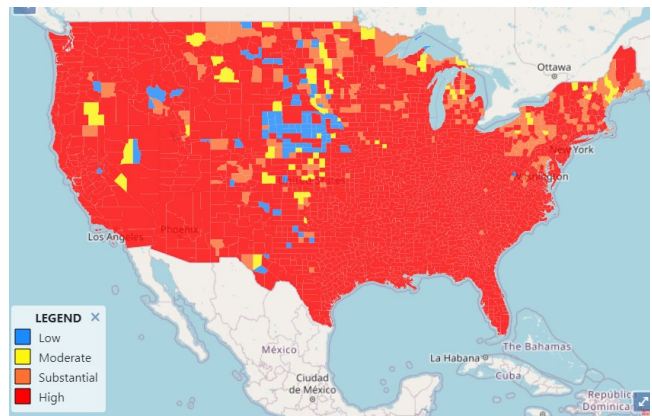
As Western Wisconsin enters dangerous phase of the pandemic, Pierce County Public Health urges the public to mask indoors

Pierce County entered the CDC's substantial community transmission last week and case numbers continue to rise. Pierce County is the only county in the Twin Cities metro not currently in the CDC's highest disease category, but officials expect to be increased to that level soon. At substantial (orange) and high (red) levels of community transmission, universal masking is now recommended by the CDC, WI DHS and Pierce County Public Health.

The maps below show the rise in transmission levels over the last month [nationally](#).



COVID-19 Transmission, July 19, 2021



COVID-19 Transmission, August 19, 2021

"We are all frustrated to be at a point where even vaccinated people need to wear a mask. It's not fair that people did the right thing and have to mask anyway. However, if you are one of those unlucky breakthrough cases, you can transmit the virus to others. This is because the Delta variant is 2-3 times more infectious than the wild strain and produces a 10 times higher viral load," said AZ Snyder, Health Officer and Public Health Director for Pierce County. Pierce County reports 2.1% of infections since January in the county have been fully vaccinated people. "Vaccines are working great at preventing hospitalization and deaths," said Snyder.

TALK TO US

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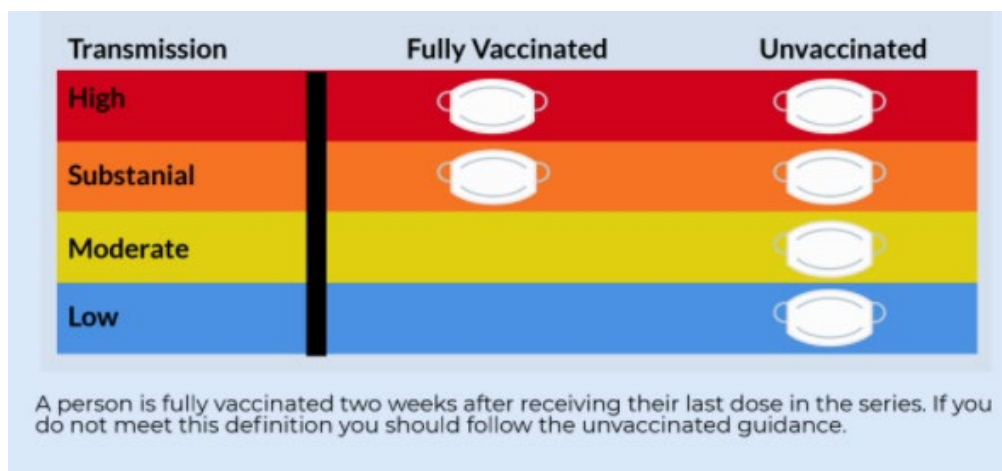
OUR MISSION

To promote healthy behaviors, prevent disease and injury, and protect against environmental hazards



Pierce County Public Health, the CDC and WI DHS have recommended universal masking regardless of transmission level for everyone aged 2 years and over in K-12 schools, childcare and healthcare settings. “If I was sending a little one to school this year, I’d be sending them with a mask- no question,” said Snyder. All Pierce County schools have received recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and public health agencies to require masks of students and staff. “Individual family choice is fine when someone’s decisions only impact themselves. That’s not the case here. Masks work best when everyone’s wearing them,” said Snyder.

If we can get disease levels in our communities back down, vaccinated people won’t need to mask in most settings anymore. For a county of our size, Pierce County will be classified as substantial if we receive more than 21 cases over a 7-day period. For high transmission, it would be over 42 cases a week. The graphic below demonstrates the mask recommendations dependent on community spread.



Information and data related to COVID-19 in Pierce County can be located by visiting: <https://covid-piercecounty-wi.hub.arcgis.com/>. Free, confidential, and fast vaccine appointments can be made in Ellsworth here: <https://piercecountycovid19vaccine.as.me/schedule.php> or in River Falls here: <https://freemandrug.as.me/schedule.php>.

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