

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 9, 2020**

**PREPARING FOR INFLUENZA AND OTHER RESPIRATORY
ILLNESSES, SUCH AS COVID-19**

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Menominee, Shawano — There has recently been an increase in media attention on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The local public health agencies for Shawano and Menominee Counties and Tribes want to point out that the risk to the general population in Wisconsin and the United States is currently low. However, there are many other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, circulating. Respiratory illnesses often spread through coughs and sneezes so public health wants to take this opportunity to remind everyone of important steps they can take to protect themselves and their families.

At this time the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), and local public health are recommending the following precautions to remain healthy:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your sleeve or a disposable tissue, and wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating, before touching your face, after going to the bathroom, and after sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- People who are sick should stay home from work, school, or childcare until they are fever free for 24 hours without medicine.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wipe down frequently touched surfaces (i.e., doorknobs, tabletops, phones, keyboards) with a disinfectant regularly, both at home and in the workplace.
- Employers should emphasize to their staff the importance of staying home when sick. Employers may want to explore tele-commute, other work-from-home options, or temporarily changing their attendance/sick-leave policies.

Public health agencies have been planning for pandemic response for years. The public health agencies of Shawano and Menominee Counties, Ho-Chunk Nation, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, and Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians want you to know that we are working with state and national experts to continuously monitor the changing COVID-19 situation. We are working with partner agencies to quickly identify and test anyone who may be infected to ensure they receive the right level of care, and are isolated to prevent any additional transmission. As the situation evolves, we will keep the public informed of any changes to these recommendations. Included below are links to trustworthy sources for information about COVID-19. We are encouraging the public to reach out to their local Public Health agency with additional questions.

COVID-19 Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/outbreaks/index.htm>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>