



Dave Koch, Director

To: All City and County Government Officials

From: Dave Koch, Director
Johnson County Public Health

Date: July 17, 2020

Subject: Face Covering Resolution

We are asking all municipalities across Johnson County and Iowa to adopt a face covering resolution. This action is to establish the importance of this practice for every person to protect themselves and others. We ask that everyone recognize and understand that wearing a face covering in public is more than a simple gesture or courtesy, it protects others.

We are facing an unprecedented time with the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 (also called COVID-19 or Coronavirus) that we continue to learn more about the virus and how to adjust life to be safer and stay healthy. We have yet to experience a full year of this pandemic and how it will affect every aspect of life.

Much is unknown, but one thing is evident, the virus is here to stay and we must take action. While our path is uncertain and much is unknown, we do have the tools to reduce risk to ourselves and each other. We just have to use them. This effort requires the collective actions of everyone.

For this strategy to work, we need everyone to put this measure, like other public health measures into practice. Many organizations or workplaces have already implemented these practices, but to be most effective, we need everyone and everywhere to practice this with us. Pockets where public health measures are not practiced are areas where the virus has a higher chance to infect others. If we can limit where those pockets occur, we are reducing the risk of transmission in our community.

Certainly, there will be those who ignore this recommendation and will even challenge it, but we know there are many who understand how important their role is in this pandemic and will choose to do the right thing.

We do not want to impose fines on those who cannot afford them, or stigmatize those who cannot afford face coverings or wear one due to circumstances described by our national public health partners and healthcare community, or unnecessarily burden municipalities with enforcement activities.

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We do want everyone in our communities to be safer from the threat of this disease and we know that without doing this, we are not doing everything we can.

With schools and colleges planning to convene in the fall, with flu season approaching thus experiencing two major respiratory viruses simultaneously, and not yet to having a vaccine or knowing if immunity exists post infection, it is clear, the time to act is now. This measure must be put in place to keep transmission low, prevent our hospitals from being overwhelmed, and protect our community members who are vulnerable.

To aid in the development of a unified face covering resolution, and in the event that sub-delegation of authority to implement a mandate pursuant to Iowa Code 29C.6(8) as communicated from the Attorney General's office, the following has been provided:

People must wear a cloth face covering when:

- In public as opposed to being in ones place of residence, when one cannot stay six (6) feet away from others
- Inside of any indoor public settings, for example, but not limited to:
 - Grocery stores
 - Pharmacies
 - Hardware stores
 - Retail stores
 - Other public settings that are not ones place of residence and when you are with persons who do not live in the household
- Outside, if keeping six (6) feet away from others is not possible
- Using public transportation or private car service (including taxis, ride share, or carpooling)

Those who are exempt from wearing a cloth face covering:

- Persons younger than 2 years old due to the risk of suffocation
- Anyone who has trouble breathing, on oxygen therapy or ventilator
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance
- Anyone who has been told by a medical, legal, or behavioral health professional not to wear face coverings

Places and times where persons are exempt from wearing a cloth face covering:

- While traveling in a personal vehicle alone or with household members
- While a person is alone or in is in the presence of only household members
- While exercising at moderate or high intensity e.g. jogging or biking
- While seated at a food establishment in the process of eating or drinking
- While obtaining a service that would require temporary removal of the persons face covering
- When federal or state law prohibits wearing a face covering or requires the removal of the face covering

Appropriate use of a cloth face covering includes:

- A snug fit, but comfortable against the side of the face

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- Completely covers the nose and mouth
- Is secured with ties or ear loops
- Includes multiple layers of fabric
- Allows for breathing without restriction
- Can be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

For more information about cloth face coverings and appropriate use, visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>