



## Health Officer

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Elkhart County Health Department  
For Immediate Release

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Many people have questions about the mask recommendations and the county commissioners' resolution concerning the size of gatherings. It's no secret that we in Elkhart County are the "hot spot" of Indiana, and one of the hot spot counties in the country. Our hospitals are filling up with patients who are sick with coronavirus, and this is extremely concerning. We must act now, and act strongly, to contain this virus and flatten our curve again. Thus, we are using tools we have available to us to help prevent further spread. The success and economic future of Elkhart County will depend on how well each person heeds the alarm and follows these recommendations. It is up to you to take responsibility for both your health and the health of your family, loved ones, and neighbors. The goal of the Health Department is to see the county's percentage of positive tests be at or lower than the state's rate for at least two weeks.

Mask use remains somewhat controversial; there are no randomized, double-blind scientific studies. No studies have been done where people are randomly selected to either wear a mask or not, studied for a period of time, and then have infection rates between the two groups compared. Because this virus is new and some information remains incomplete, we must use the best information we currently have. And that seems to show that when added to social distancing and hand washing, mask use will decrease the spread of the virus.

For more information on mask use, please see the following articles:

"Wearing surgical masks in public could help slow COVID-19 pandemic's advance" in the April 3, 2020 edition of ScienceDaily.

"A rapid systematic review of the efficacy of face masks and respirators against coronaviruses and other respiratory transmissible viruses for the community, healthcare workers and sick patients" by C. Raina MacIntyre and Abrar Ahmad Chughtai on April 30, 2020, online edition of International Journal of Nursing Studies.

"Spate of new research supports wearing masks to control coronavirus spread" by Ben Guarino, Chelsea Janes, and Ariana Eunjung Cha in the June 13, 2020 edition of The Washington Post.

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*Improving the Lives, Health and Environment of our Community*



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.