Winnebago County Health Department Recommends Further Limiting for Gatherings

WINNEBAGO COUNTY – In an increased effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the risk of additional exposure, the Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) is following the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Illinois Department of Public Health and recommending that businesses, institutions, and organizations suspend all gatherings and events of 10 people or more until further notice. This suspension includes churches, gyms, and stores – unless these organizations can limit the number of people to under 10 and provide space for appropriate social distancing. Limiting gatherings is a proven method of containing and minimizing the spread of disease.

Daycare centers are not included since first responders and health care providers rely on daycare facilities in order to continue critical work. Local daycare centers have been given guidance by the Winnebago County Health Department to reduce risk of exposure.

Across the nation and the region, elective surgeries are being delayed because of COVID-19. If you have questions about these delays, please talk to your healthcare provider.

The Winnebago County Health Department in coordination with local healthcare partners and the Illinois Department of Public Health are monitoring COVID-19’s impact on the communities through the number of severe cases at hospitals. The whole community has a role in helping to prevent the spread of the virus. Now that COVID-19 is in the Winnebago County community, it is important to prioritize those who are severely ill for testing. Those who do not have symptoms of COVID-19 do not need to be tested. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath), call your healthcare provider, urgent care clinic or the emergency department BEFORE you visit. Your healthcare provider will determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19 and may recommend that you stay home and provide self-care if you have mild symptoms.

The public should remember the following 5 points about COVID-19 Testing:
1. No symptoms, no testing needed
2. Call BEFORE you go to your healthcare provider if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath)
3. If you have mild symptoms, your healthcare provider may instruct you to stay home and self-care. You may not be tested to reduce exposure to others and prioritize testing of severely ill patients
4. Only go to the Emergency Department if your symptoms are severe or if directed to do so by your provider
5. Testing requires a clinicians order

For general questions about COVID-19, call:
- Illinois Department of Public Health hotline at 1-800-889-3931
- For question specific to Winnebago County, call the Winnebago County Health Department hotline at 1-815-319-6705 (Available Monday thru Friday 9am-5pm)