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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Whiteside County Health Department Strongly Recommend Masking in Indoor Settings Regardless of Vaccination Status

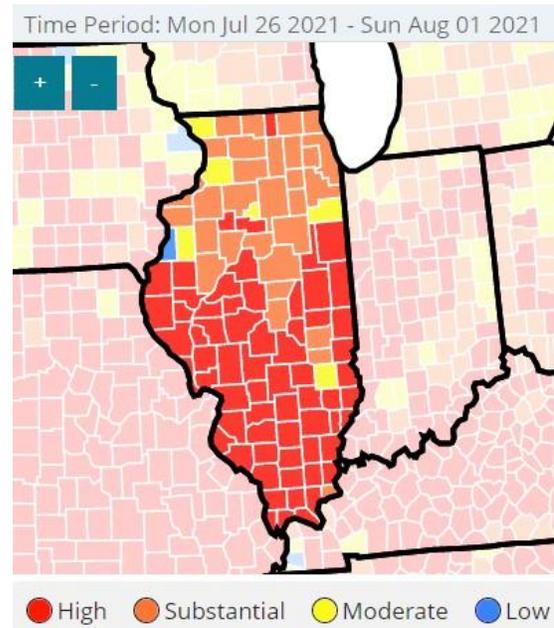
August 3, 2021 – Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated guidance strongly recommending everyone, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, mask while indoors in [areas experiencing substantial or high COVID-19 transmission](#). Although the spread of COVID-19 in Whiteside County is not yet classified as substantial or high, the Whiteside County Health Department (WCHD) strongly recommends that employers, retailers, restaurants/bars, fitness/recreational centers, libraries, governmental entities, healthcare facilities, and other public venues implement **UNIVERSAL INDOOR MASKING** of their staff and patrons regardless of vaccination status.

WCHD makes this recommendation in response to the significant number of Illinois counties and surrounding areas where transmission of COVID-19 is substantial or high and in part to the low percentage of [Whiteside County residents who are fully vaccinated](#) (Approximately 43.2%). COVID-19 is unlikely to respect county borders, increased transmission regionally is likely to pose a significant risk of transmission of COVID-19 locally among individuals who are not yet fully vaccinated, including those under 12 who are not yet eligible.

It is our duty to work together and each do what we can to protect each other, local businesses and our community. Until more of our community is fully vaccinated, masking and physical/social distancing will be necessary to protect the majority of individuals. Additionally, WCHD recommends individuals wash their hands, sanitize surfaces, test/stay home when you have symptoms of COVID-19 and visit [vaccines.gov](#) to find a COVID-19 vaccine location near them.

The pandemic is not over and we must continue to be vigilant in our individual behaviors and our collective behaviors as a community.

### CDC Level of Community Transmission



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