



## Health Officer

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[elkhartcountyhealth.org](http://elkhartcountyhealth.org)

Elkhart County Health Department

Lydia Mertz, MD

Elkhart County Health Officer

June 30, 2020

Yesterday I issued a Public Health Order, requiring masks to be worn by everyone when in public areas, inside or outside, where 6 feet distancing from someone outside your household cannot be maintained. The Order, and FAQs accompanying it are posted on our Facebook page and website.

Please note that face coverings do not replace proper hygiene, or physical distancing as protective measures, but it does add greatly to the effectiveness of these measures. A face covering will help protect others and slow the community spread of COVID-19, which has been so problematic in Elkhart County. The face covering does not need to be fancy—a scarf or bandana will do as long as it has several layers of fabric, and can fit tightly over your nose and mouth. The CDC website has several examples of cloth coverings that can be made at home simply, from old T-shirts, and how to make a no-sew face covering.

To protect yourself and others, **please wear a face covering correctly!** It should cover your nose and mouth at all times, and fit snugly. Please wash your hands when handling your mask, and wash a cloth mask every day. Children older than 2 years of age should wear a mask in public just like adults do, for the same reasons: to protect themselves and others! Younger children will need some supervision, naturally, but most children want to imitate the adults around them. Children may prefer to have their own “special” mask decorated the way they want, or just with a special picture on it. Some children find elastic ear loops annoying to their sensitive ears, and will do better with masks that tie.

Everyone should feel free to experiment with different styles of masks and material (as long as it's not loose-weave material, or see-through material), to find what works best for you.

The virus will be with us until we get an effective, widespread vaccine, and we need to make distancing, wearing masks, respiratory hygiene, staying home when ill, and disinfecting surfaces a habit we learn to live with.

I will be posting weekly positivity rates and other measures of how we as a county are doing with these measures in place, so everyone can see our progress. The health of the county depends on what we ALL do now!

Lydia Mertz, M.D.

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



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

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