



Elkhart County Health Department

July 7, 2020

Elkhart County has been held back in Stage 4 as the rest of the state took a small step toward opening up more. Information from other states and cities has shown us that opening up too fast, without widespread use of public health safeguards, results in sharp increases in the number of cases, and straining healthcare resources. Hospitals in the hardest-hit areas of the United States are again experiencing full ICUs, and a lower number of beds for more "routine" use, such as heart attacks, gall bladder removals, knee or hip replacements, cancer surgeries, etc. As more people are sickened by the coronavirus and require hospitalization, the situation worsens.

Elkhart County could quickly end up just like this if we don't keep on the track we're on now, with greater physical distancing, mask-wearing in public, and hand washing. We know the virus can be spread by persons who show no symptoms and have only mild symptoms. Current evidence seems to prove the virus is most infectious in the 48 hours BEFORE a person develops symptoms. While we know that older people and people with preexisting health problems are more likely to require hospitalization, this virus also will strike and kill younger, healthy people at random. No one should consider himself or herself safe from this virus!

I urge everyone to stay this course for now! No matter what the weather is, what your traditional summers look like, or whom you are around, we all need protection from COVID-19. We all need to remember to look out for others and wear a mask when out to avoid unknowingly infecting someone else. The changes we make in our behaviors now will allow us to fully open, but more importantly, we will save lives.

Lydia Mertz, MD
Elkhart County Health Officer

Improving the Lives, Health and Environment of our Community



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.