

Slowing the Spread of COVID-19: Mitigation Strategies for Wisconsin Communities

DHS is providing several key metrics, updated weekly. **This interpretation guide walks through how to navigate the COVID-19 Disease Activity and Hospital Metrics.**

Jurisdictions may use these COVID-19 metrics, in addition to their local context, to choose mitigation strategies, or decisions to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

The information in this guide may help inform local decisions, but does not represent a mandated approach. Local and tribal health departments across the state have and may continue to pursue other locally-generated approaches.



Data are available on the DHS website: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/local.htm>





Decision Making Cycle for COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies

Step 1

Determine the extent
of the epidemic on its
own.

Using DHS Metrics on
Disease Activity

Step 2

Consider your local
healthcare capacity to
handle the known and
suspected level of the
epidemic.

Using DHS Metrics on
Hospital Capacity

Continue to
reevaluate
as needed.

Step 3

Select & review
mitigation
strategies.

Supplementing with local context



Step 1: Determine the extent of the epidemic on its own.

Step 1:
Choose
your
county or
region.

Step 2:
Choose
your date

Step 3:
Start with
the **cases**
indicator.

Step 4:
Choose your
view type.

Step 5:
What is your
case activity
level?

COVID-19 Disease Activity

	Case Activity	Percent Positive	CLI Activity	ILI Activity	
Wisconsin	Very high	Medium	Medium	Low	

Updated: 1/20/2021

Hover over visuals and
text to find more
information.

Select Area
Wisconsin

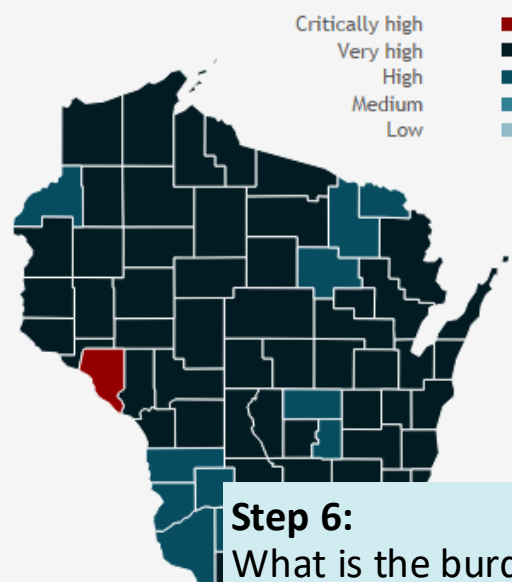
Two Week Range
1/6/2021 - 1/19/2021

Activity Indicator
☒ Case Activity
☐ Percent Positive
☐ CLI Activity
☐ ILI Activity

View Type
☒ County View
☐ Region View

In Wisconsin between 1/6/2021 - 1/19/2021, the case activity level was **very high**.

This page shows information on case burden (rate per 100,000) and trajectory (percent case change). Case activity is a combination of burden and trajectory. For definitions of burden, trajectory, and disease activity levels, see below "About our data: How we measure case activity". Confirmed case activity is an important starting metric to understand current COVID-19 levels in your community. For additional information beyond cases, look at the COVID-like illness (CLI) and influenza-like illness (ILI) sections which provide more insight into the levels of respiratory illness in your community.



Mapbox OS

Step 6:
What is the burden
of case activity?

Wisconsin data (last two weeks)

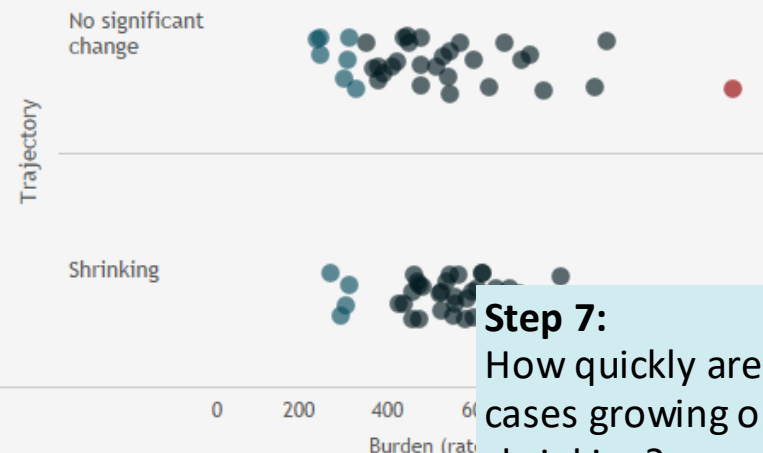
Activity



Burden
(per 100,000)

539.3
(Very high)

Case activity level by county (last two weeks)
Each circle represents a county.



Step 7:
How quickly are
cases growing or
shrinking?

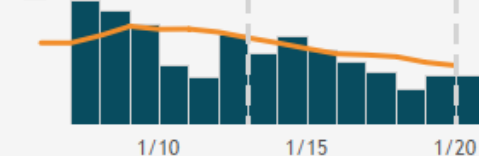
Trajectory

-32% ▼

Cases over time

Average Daily Cases

Positive Cases





Determining the Severity of the COVID-19 Epidemic through **Disease Activity**

DHS metrics to use: Case Activity
(*additionally CLI, & ILI*)

Questions to ask to determine the spread of the epidemic.

Case Activity

- What is your current case activity level?
- How high is your burden number?
- How does your current trajectory compare with recent weeks?

- Do your daily counts suggest that your trajectory will increase soon?

Symptoms (CLI/ILI)

- Do CLI visits look worrisome (high and/or increasing)? Does ILI look worrisome?

Additional LTHD Metrics & Context to Consider:

- What is the context for your low/medium/high/very high/critically high case activity level? Are cases contained in a single, controlled outbreak, or are they out in the community, implying greater transmission?
- Is your community particularly vulnerable, such that the same number of cases might do more harm here than someplace else?
- Is there any group that is being under- or over-served through testing? Is free or low-cost testing available in your community? Testing approaches may affect disease activity metrics.
- Does your community have a large population of travelers who could affect transmission, such as college students, migrant workers, homeless individuals, business travelers, or others?

Interpreting the numbers: Consider your local context

Most or all cases occur in the context of a known, contained outbreak.

CLI or ILI are high and stable or growing.
Surrounding areas are high or increasing rapidly.





Step 2: Consider your local healthcare capacity to handle the known and suspected level of the epidemic.

COVID-19 Hospital Capacity

COVID Patients Hospitalized

Shrinking

COVID Patients in ICU

No significant change



Step 1:
Choose your region.

Wisconsin

021

Hover over visuals and text to find more information.

Select Area
Wisconsin

Two Week Range
1/6/2021 - 1/19/2021

Step 2:
Choose your date range.

Trajectory of COVID Patient Hospitalizations by Region

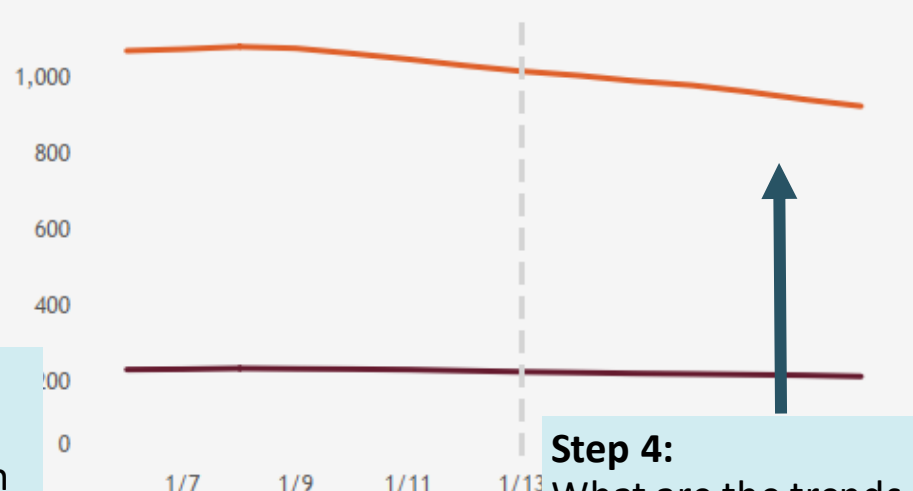


Wisconsin data

How close are hospitals to reaching their capacity?

This page shows the trends in COVID hospitalizations and ICU stays, hospital bed use, and ventilator use. Note that hospitals are used to adjusting to volume changes in capacity. Data are from hospitals reporting into the Emergency Management Resource System (EMResource).

COVID Patients Hospitalized vs COVID Patients in ICU for Wisconsin



Step 3:
What is your hospitalization trajectory?

Step 4:
What are the trends of hospitalized patients?

Step 5:
What is your current bed use?

Hospital Beds

83.6% in use

ICU Beds

83.8% in use

Ventilators

19.1% in use

100%

1/10

1/15

1/20

100%

1/10

1/15

1/20

Step 6:
What is your current ventilator use?



Determining the Severity of the COVID-19 Epidemic through **Hospital Metrics**

DHS metrics to use: Hospital Metrics
(COVID-19 hospitalizations, bed use, & ventilator use)

Questions to ask to determine the ability to treat patients.

Bed Use

- What % of total beds and ICU beds are occupied?
- Are trends pointing towards increasing use of hospital beds?

COVID Patients

- Are COVID hospitalizations and COVID ICU patients trending up?

Ventilator Use

- What % of ventilator capacity is available?
- Are trends pointing towards increasing ventilator use?

Additional LTHD Metrics & Context to Consider:

- What are healthcare providers and systems in your area telling you about their ability to keep up? Most hospitals report they can function with a high percentage of beds in use as long as they have sufficient staff.
- Do you have a population that is likely to forego care until the illness is severe, due to geographic distance, insurance status, cultural barriers, mistrust of hospitals, or other barriers?

Interpreting the numbers: Consider your local context

Low proportion of beds/ICU beds occupied.
Trends in bed use are steady or declining.
Trends in COVID patients and COVID ICU patients are steady or declining.
Low proportion of ventilators in use.
Trends in ventilator use are steady or declining.

High proportion of beds/ICU beds occupied.
Trends in bed use are high and steady or increasing.
Trends in COVID patients and COVID ICU patients are high and steady or increasing.
High proportion of ventilators in use.
Trends in ventilator use are high and steady or increasing.





How to assess activity level to inform your mitigation strategy. Use DHS metrics on Disease Activity. Before landing on a mitigation strategy, consider hospital metrics in your area.

Activity Level	Burden	Trajectory	Mitigation Strategy Continuum	
Critically High	Critically High	Any	<div>Consider:</div> <div>Your local context</div> <div>.....</div> <div>Additional disease activity metrics</div> <div>.....</div> <div>Hospital metrics</div> <div>.....</div>	Critically High and Very High Mitigation with aggressive precautions
Very High	Very High	Any		
High	High	Any		
	Moderately High	Growing		High Mitigation
		No Significant Change		
	Moderate	Growing		
Medium	Moderately High	Shrinking		Medium Mitigation
	Moderate	Growing		
		No Significant Change		
		Shrinking		
	Low	Growing		
Low	Low	No Significant Change		Low Mitigation implementing certain precautions
		Shrinking		



Mitigation Strategies: With the goal of COVID-19 control & elimination

Remember: mitigation strategies exist on a continuum.

Consider your local context in conjunction with COVID-19 metrics to determine what makes the most sense.

All Risk Levels

- **Physically distance** at least 6 feet from people who do not live together.
- **Wear a cloth face mask** unless one cannot for medical reasons.
- **Wash hands frequently** with soap and water. Hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) use if soap & water are unavailable.
- If experiencing [symptoms of COVID-19](#), **limit interactions in your community and with others as much as possible, and get tested.**
- Businesses should **follow the [WEDC's guidelines for reopening](#).**

Critically High and Very High Risk: Page 9

If the assessment of local disease activity and hospital capacity suggest pursuing a very high mitigation strategy, consider implementing aggressive precautions to limit community transmission and outbreaks while minimal activity continues.

High Risk: Page 10

If the assessment of local disease activity and hospital capacity suggest pursuing a high mitigation strategy, consider implementing heightened precautions to limit community transmission and outbreaks.

Medium Risk: Page 11

If the assessment of local disease activity and hospital capacity suggest pursuing a medium mitigation strategy, consider implementing certain precautions to limit community transmission and outbreaks.

Low Risk: Page 12

If the assessment of local disease activity and hospital capacity suggest pursuing a low mitigation strategy, consider implementing certain precautions to limit community transmission and outbreaks.

Specific Scenarios

Each of the mitigation strategies listed below include certain activity-specific approaches to consider. There are several other categories not listed where specific guidance from state agencies has already been developed.

Long-Term Care: Refer to DHS Division of Quality Assurance guidance on [long-term care settings](#)

Daycare: Refer to Wisconsin Department of Children and Families [guidance on child care](#)

K-12 Schools: Refer to Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction [Education Forward](#) framework.

Youth Sports: Refer to CDC guidance and [considerations for youth sports](#).

Critically High and Very High Mitigation



Activity-Specific Considerations

Note this is a menu of potential strategies to consider, it is not an all-inclusive list. The identification of local clusters associated with activities may indicate targeted strategies for specific sectors.

<u>Travel</u>	Consider recommending people self monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days after return from travel.
<u>Gatherings</u>	Indoors: Consider NO gatherings outside of household.
	Outdoors: Consider limiting outdoor gatherings to 10 people or fewer with physical distancing and face coverings.
<u>Bars/Restaurants</u>	Indoors: Restaurants: consider take-out, curbside pick-up, or delivery only. Consider closing indoor bars.
	Outdoors: Restaurants: consider take-out, curbside pick-up, or delivery only. Consider closing outdoor bars.
<u>Salons/Spas</u>	Consider not opening except minimum operations.
<u>Offices/Workplaces</u>	Consider allowing only essential workforce on-site with active monitoring of symptoms, physical distancing, and face coverings when feasible.
<u>Grocery Stores and Pharmacies</u>	Remain open but no dine-in, self-service or customer self-dispensing.
<u>Retail</u>	Consider only mail delivery and curbside pick-up; stores with outside entrances may allow up to 5 patrons to enter, for example.
<u>Gyms</u>	Consider not opening except minimum operations.
<u>Campgrounds</u>	Consider not opening except minimum operations.
<u>Hotels/Lodging</u>	Consider opening with strict sanitation protocols.
<u>Concerts/Festivals/ Sports Events</u>	Consider not holding these events.
<u>Pools and Beaches</u>	Consider not opening except to minimum operations.
<u>Outdoor Amusement Parks</u>	Consider not opening except to minimum operations.
<u>Medical Services</u>	Emergency medical services should always be available and encouraged. If health care capacity is strained, consider scaling back routine and elective services.



Activity-Specific Considerations

Note this is a menu of potential strategies to consider, it is not an all-inclusive list. The identification of local clusters associated with activities may indicate targeted strategies for specific sectors.

<u>Travel</u>	Consider recommending people self monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days after return from travel.
<u>Gatherings</u>	<p>Indoors: Consider allowing gatherings outside of household with limited size (example: 10 people or fewer with physical distancing and face coverings).</p> <p>Outdoors: Consider allowing gatherings with limited size (example: 25 people or fewer with physical distancing and face coverings).</p>
<u>Bars/Restaurants</u>	<p>Indoors: Consider allowing restaurants to open with limited capacity (example: 25% capacity). Consider closing indoor bars.</p> <p>Outdoors: Consider allowing outdoor restaurant and bar operations at a limited capacity (example: 50%).</p>
<u>Salons/Spas</u>	Consider allowing these services to operate with limited capacity (25% capacity).
<u>Offices/Workplaces</u>	Continue remote work as feasible. For those who can't work remotely, consider allowing no more than 25% of workforce on site with active monitoring of symptoms, physical distancing, and face coverings when feasible.
<u>Grocery Stores and Pharmacies</u>	Consider staying open with limited dine-in (example: 25% capacity), with no self-service or customer self-dispensing.
<u>Retail</u>	Consider allowing for higher patron or capacity percentage (example: 50% capacity).
<u>Gyms</u>	Consider allowing to reopen with limited capacity (example: 25% capacity).
<u>Campgrounds</u>	Consider opening only independent units at 25% capacity.
<u>Hotels/Lodging</u>	Consider opening with strict sanitation protocols.
<u>Concerts/Festivals/Sports Events</u>	Consider allowing these events to occur with limited spectators (example: 25%, not including employees).
<u>Pools and Beaches</u>	Consider opening with limited capacity (example: 25% capacity).
<u>Outdoor Amusement Parks</u>	Consider opening with limited capacity (example: 25% capacity).
<u>Medical Services</u>	Emergency medical services should always be available and encouraged. Encourage routine and elective services to continue if health care capacity is not strained.

Medium Mitigation



Activity-Specific Considerations <i>Note this is a menu of potential strategies to consider, it is not an all-inclusive list. The identification of local clusters associated with activities may indicate targeted strategies for specific sectors.</i>	
<u>Travel</u>	Consider recommending people self monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days after return from travel.
<u>Gatherings</u>	Indoors: Consider allowing gatherings outside of household with limited size (example: 25 people or fewer with physical distancing and face coverings).
	Outdoors: Consider allowing gatherings with limited size (example: 50 people or fewer with physical distancing and face coverings).
<u>Bars/Restaurants</u>	Indoors: Consider allowing restaurants to open with limited capacity (example: 50% capacity). Consider allowing indoor bars to open with limited capacity (example: 25% capacity).
	Outdoors: Consider allowing outdoor restaurant and bar operations at a limited capacity (example: 75% capacity).
<u>Salons/Spas</u>	Consider allowing these services to operate with limited capacity (example: 50% capacity).
<u>Offices/Workplaces</u>	Continue remote work as feasible. For those who can't work remotely, consider allowing no more than 50% of workforce on site with active monitoring of symptoms, physical distancing, and face coverings when feasible.
<u>Grocery Stores</u> and <u>Pharmacies</u>	Consider staying open with limited dine-in (example: 50% capacity), and reducing restrictions on self-service or customer self-dispensing.
<u>Retail</u>	Consider allowing for higher patron or capacity percentage (example: 50% of capacity).
<u>Gyms</u>	Consider allowing to reopen with limited capacity (example: 50% capacity).
<u>Campgrounds</u>	Consider opening only independent units at 50% capacity.
<u>Hotels/Lodging</u>	Consider opening with strict sanitation protocols.
<u>Concerts/Festivals/Sports Events</u>	Consider allowing these events to occur with limited spectators (example: 50% capacity, not including employees).
<u>Pools</u> and <u>Beaches</u>	Consider opening with limited capacity (example: 50% capacity).
<u>Outdoor Amusement Parks</u>	Consider opening with limited capacity (example: 50% capacity).
<u>Medical Services</u>	Routine, elective, and emergency medical services available and encouraged.

Low Mitigation



Activity-Specific Considerations

Note this is a menu of potential strategies to consider, it is not an all-inclusive list. The identification of local clusters associated with activities may indicate targeted strategies for specific sectors.

<u>Travel</u>	Consider recommending people self monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days after return from travel.
<u>Gatherings</u>	<p>Indoors: Consider allowing gatherings outside of household with limited size (example: 50 people or fewer with physical distancing and face coverings).</p> <p>Outdoors: Consider allowing gatherings with limited size (example: 100 people or fewer with physical distancing and face coverings).</p>
<u>Bars/Restaurants</u>	<p>Indoors: Consider allowing restaurants to open with limited capacity (example: 75% capacity). Consider allowing indoor bars to open with limited capacity (example: 50% capacity).</p> <p>Outdoors: Consider allowing outdoor restaurant and bar operations at a limited capacity (example: 75% capacity).</p>
<u>Salons/Spas</u>	Consider allowing these services to operate with employees wearing masks at all times and customers wearing masks to the extent possible.
<u>Offices/Workplaces</u>	Consider allowing on-site at 75% capacity with active monitoring of symptoms, physical distancing and face coverings when feasible.
<u>Grocery Stores and Pharmacies</u>	Consider staying open with limited dine-in (example: 75% capacity), and reducing restrictions on self-service or customer self-dispensing.
<u>Retail</u>	Consider allowing for higher patron or capacity percentage (example: 75% of capacity).
<u>Gyms</u>	Consider allowing to reopen with limited capacity (example: 75% capacity).
<u>Campgrounds</u>	Consider opening only independent units at 75% capacity.
<u>Hotels/Lodging</u>	Consider opening with strict sanitation protocols.
<u>Concerts/Festivals/Sports Events</u>	Consider allowing these events to occur with limited spectators (example: 75% capacity, not including employees).
<u>Pools and Beaches</u>	Consider opening with limited capacity (example: 75% capacity).
<u>Outdoor Amusement Parks</u>	Consider opening with limited capacity (example: 75% capacity).
<u>Medical Services</u>	Routine, elective, and emergency medical services available and encouraged.