



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Linn County, Iowa

Actions to Combat COVID-19

Updated March 23, 2021

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Linn County Public Health has sought to recommend action and practices based on available data and best practice research. This included recommended safety practices for keeping our community safe while continuing to support businesses, restaurants, and schools in the county. This guidance outlines recommended actions across six tiers. Tiers 1-3 include the recommended actions that should be taken to address significant increases in COVID-19 in Linn County. The following health metrics are used to determine when the spread of the virus requires additional restrictive actions be taken or loosened.

General Actions to Combat COVID-19

- Stay home when ill.
- Wear a mask or cloth face covering when in public and when physical distancing is not possible.
- Continue to wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Continue physical distancing of 6 or more feet from non-household members.
- Individuals at high-risk (65 years of age or older and those with underlying health conditions) stay home, as able.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces often.

What could cause a recommendation for more restrictive actions be taken?

➤ Statistically significant increase in new cases over 7 days


➤ **And**, one of the following:

- Sustained 7-day increase in hospital admissions for COVID-19 illness
- Reduction in hospital capacity (Inpatient bed capacity or under 20%) over 3 day period

OR

➤ Test positivity rate greater than or equal to 8% over 7 days

Critical Phase Actions: Once Linn County meets the criteria above for more restrictive action, the following tiered guidance will be considered for recommended action. Tier 1 to 3 goes from most restrictive to least. All criteria listed under tier 3 applies as guidance is more restrictive. Movement through the tiers may fluctuate backwards or forwards as the data is being monitored.

Critical Phase			
Setting	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
	 <p>All previous guidance applies, unless subsequent guidance is more restrictive</p>		
General Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require the use of masks or cloth face coverings in public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals should limit interaction with non-household members including during holiday's and special events Limit travel out of state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals 65 and older and those with underlying health conditions stay home, as able Maintain physical distance of 6 foot or more from non-household members Wear a mask when in public or when physical distancing is not possible Wash hands often, cover cough, stay home when ill Clean frequently touched surfaces
Mass Gatherings & Social Events Including weddings, funerals, potlucks, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum indoor/outdoor gathering size of 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit indoor/outdoor gatherings with defined borders to the lesser of 25 or 25% of room capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit indoor/outdoor gatherings with defined borders to the lesser of 50 or 50% of room capacity Community events occurring in an outdoor environment without defined boundaries are to be paused at this time.
Bars & Restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote carry-out only service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No ordering, seating, or congregating at the bar No seating of multiple parties at a single table Limit seating capacity to 50%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tables and groups positioned at least 6 foot apart No standing or congregating indoors or at entrance/exits Customers should remain masked unless eating or drinking
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institute remote work practices for all non-essential workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote telework for as many workers as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stagger workstations/employees to allow for 6 foot physical distancing Screen onsite employees for COVID-19 symptoms Encourage employees to telework, if possible
Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional restrictions recommended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment only personal services Limit groups to household members only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure 6 foot separation between client groups Limit occupancy of indoor facilities to allow for 6 foot separation Require patrons wear mask when in the establishment

Loosening Restrictive Actions: Once Linn County meets the criteria to move out of the critical phase based on the above metrics, the following tiered guidance will be considered to move toward community recovery. All criteria listed under tier 6 applies as guidance is more restrictive in the previous tiers. Movement back and forth through the tiers will be informed by the metrics listed under each tier. All three metrics must be met over a three week period in order to move to the next tier. If at any time, the data trends in the wrong direction Linn County may move to a previous tier.

	Moderate Risk	Stable	Community Recovery
Metrics	Tier 4	Tier 5	Tier 6
Case Count (7-day average)	20-49	10-19	<10
Test Positivity Rate (7-day average)	2.5 – 5%	1 - 2.49%	<1%
Percent who Initiate Vaccination	25-49%	50-69%	70-100%
All previous guidance applies, unless subsequent guidance is more restrictive			
General Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals 65 and older and those with underlying health conditions stay home, as able 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain physical distance of 6 foot or more from non-household members Wear a mask or facial covering when in public or when physical distancing is not possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash hands often, cover cough, stay home when ill Clean frequently touched surfaces
Mass Gatherings & Social Events Including weddings, funerals, potlucks, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit indoor/outdoor gatherings with defined borders to the lesser of 100 or 50% of room capacity Community events in an outdoor environment without defined boundaries should be paused Provide an option for virtual attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit indoor/outdoor gatherings with defined borders to the lesser of 150 or 75% of room capacity Ensure 6 foot separation between groups and onsite vendors, if applicable. Outdoor events may resume with restrictions, to include masks be worn and physical distancing protocol be in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resume normal operations
Bars & Restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tables and groups positioned at least 6 foot apart Customers should remain masked unless eating or drinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tables and groups positioned at least 6 foot apart Customers should remain masked unless eating or drinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resume normal operations
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage employees to telework, if possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove frequently touched items as able/applicable (ex: chairs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are to stay home when ill
Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require patrons wear mask when in the establishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage physical distancing Encourage masks be worn when in establishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resume normal operations

Data Notes

The data used to track the Actions to Combat COVID-19 metrics is gathered from a variety of sources to include case and testing information from the Iowa Disease Surveillance System (IDSS), vaccine administration from Iowa's Immunization Registry Information System (IRIS), and the daily hospitalization data from the Iowa Health Alert Network (IHAN).

COVID-19 Case Data

Metric: **Statistically significant increase in new cases over 7-days**

Method: The age-adjusted incidence rate is calculated for new positive cases received over a week period (Sunday through Saturday). The standard error and confidence interval are then computed to determine significance from the previous week's calculation.

Frequency of Calculation: Calculated at the beginning of the week spanning Sunday – Saturday

Metric: **Case Count (7-day average)**

Method: The number of cases divided by 7 to identify the 7-day average.

Frequency of Calculation: Rolling calculation by day

Test Positivity Rate

Metric: **Test Positivity Rate (7-day average)**

Method: Number of positive cases over a 7-day period divided by number of total tests performed over the same 7-day period.

Frequency of Calculation: Calculated at the beginning of the week spanning Sunday – Saturday

COVID-19 Vaccine Data

Metric: **Percent of population who have initiated vaccination**

Method: The number of individuals who have initiated or completed their vaccine series divided by the census for the eligible Linn County population of 16 years and older

Frequency of Calculation: Calculated at the beginning of the week spanning Sunday - Saturday

Hospital Data

Metric: **Sustained 7-day increase in hospital admissions for COVID-19 illness**

Method: Number of Linn County residents with COVID-19 admitted over a week

Frequency of Calculation: Calculated at the beginning of the week spanning Sunday – Saturday

Metric: **Reduction in hospital capacity (ICU capacity or medical surgical beds under 20%)**

Method: Total inpatient beds available at Mercy Medical Center and Unity Point – St. Luke's Hospitals divided by total inpatient beds at both facilities.

Frequency of Calculation: Daily monitor

Note: Includes non-county residents