



Protecting Each Other from COVID-19

(July 29, 2021)

After months of decline, North Carolina is experiencing a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations among those who are unvaccinated. The Delta variant, which is now the predominant strain of the COVID-19 virus in North Carolina, is significantly more contagious than the original virus. While the original virus spread from one person to an average of two or three people, the Delta variant is spreading from one person to an average of six people. Therefore, unvaccinated people are at greater risk of catching and spreading COVID-19, and they pose a risk to children under 12 who cannot be vaccinated and those who are immunocompromised. Getting vaccinated is the most effective way to prevent serious illness, hospitalizations and death, and slow community spread. Rigorous clinical trials among thousands of people ages 12 and older, have proven that vaccines are safe and effective.

If you are not fully vaccinated, you should:

- **Get vaccinated.** Getting vaccinated prevents severe illness, hospitalization and death, including from the Delta variant, and reduces community spread of the virus. People who are unvaccinated pose a risk to those at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and those who are not eligible for the vaccine, including children under 12. The highest spread of cases is happening in places with low vaccination rates
- **Practice the 3 Ws.** Wear a face covering in all indoor public indoor settings. Wait 6 feet apart in all public settings. Wash your hands often.
- **Not gather with unvaccinated individuals who do not live with you.** If you do gather, stay outside and keep 6 feet of distance.
- **Not travel.** If you do travel, get tested 1-3 days before and 3-5 days after travel AND stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel.
- **Get tested** if you have any symptoms of COVID-19.
- **Quarantine and get tested** if you've been exposed to COVID-19, even if you don't have symptoms.
- **Participate in routine screening testing**, when offered.

If you are fully vaccinated, you should:

- Wear a mask in all indoor public spaces if you live in area of high or substantial levels of transmission as [defined by the CDC](#) until more people are vaccinated and viral transmission decreases.
- Wear a face covering in all K-12 schools, child care, indoor settings with a large number of children or child-focused activities (e.g., children's museums), public transportation, health care settings, high density congregate settings (e.g., correction and detention facilities, homeless shelters, migrant farm camps), and large crowded indoor venues (e.g., arenas, stadiums).
- Get tested if you have any symptoms of COVID-19. After an exposure to COVID-19, you should get tested 3-5 days after exposure and wear a mask around others until you get a negative test result.

Employers should:

- Require employees to report vaccination status. Require employees who are not fully vaccinated to:
 - Wear a face covering indoors AND maintain physical distancing from others.
 - Participate in screening testing programs, especially in high risk setting such as congregate living settings.

If collecting vaccination status from employees is not possible, require all employees to wear face coverings indoors and participate in screening testing programs.

- Encourage fully vaccinated employees wear a face covering indoors when within 6 feet of other people if they are in an area of high or substantial levels of transmission as defined by the CDC.
- Post signage saying all employees and visitors should wear a face covering in areas of high and substantial transmission.
- Remind all employees, visitors and patrons to self-monitor [and get tested](#) if they have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19.