

**Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19):  
Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People**

This document provides guidance for people who are fully vaccinated<sup>1</sup> with any of the COVID-19 vaccines that are currently authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the World Health Organization (WHO). This guidance applies to the general public and non-healthcare facility settings. Separate guidance is available for healthcare settings at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance).

**Vaccine effectiveness and the Delta variant**

COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective even against the circulating variants of the virus that causes COVID-19, including the Delta variant. However, no vaccines are 100% effective and there are breakthrough cases of COVID-19 even in fully vaccinated people. Fortunately, if you catch COVID-19 when you are fully vaccinated, the infection will likely be mild. The vaccines are very effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death. At this point, most people who become very sick with COVID-19 are unvaccinated people.

Vaccination remains the most important public health intervention for ending the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently all Americans age 12 and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. It is vital for everyone to get vaccinated as soon as they are eligible. If you're not vaccinated, find out more about the COVID-19 vaccines at [coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccine](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccine).

The Delta variant currently poses a serious concern. It is much more contagious than the original strain of the COVID-19 virus and is spreading rapidly in the United States. New scientific evidence has emerged that if fully vaccinated people become infected with the Delta variant, they can spread it to other people. The CDC updated its guidance for fully vaccinated people on 7/27/21 to reflect the latest information about the Delta variant.

**Activities for fully vaccinated people**

- **Outdoor activities:**
  - Outdoor activities pose **minimal** risk to fully vaccinated people
  - Fully vaccinated people can participate in outdoor activities safely without face masks or social distancing.
    - Fully vaccinated people may choose to wear a mask in **crowded outdoor settings** if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised<sup>2</sup>.
    - Fully vaccinated people may also choose to wear a mask during outdoor activities if they are in an area with low vaccination rates and substantial to high COVID-19 rates.
- **Indoor activities:**
  - **Fully vaccinated people must wear masks in indoor public settings**
    - This includes any business or establishment open to members of the public (including but not limited to: grocery stores, restaurants and bars (when not eating or drinking), places of worship, gyms, office buildings, libraries, indoor entertainment venues, and common areas of apartment or condominium complexes).

<sup>1</sup> A person is considered fully vaccinated **14 days after completion** of a COVID-19 vaccination series (after the second dose of a 2-dose series, or after one dose of a single-dose vaccine).

<sup>2</sup> **Immunocompromised** means having a weakened immune system due to a medical condition or from taking medications that suppress the immune system. This includes, but is not limited to: people on chemotherapy, people with blood cancers like leukemia, people who have had an organ transplant or stem cell transplant, and people on dialysis.

- **This does not include indoor gatherings at private residences.**
- **Special settings:**
  - Fully vaccinated people **must** wear masks in school, childcare, healthcare, correctional, and homeless shelter settings.
- **A mask is not required during the following activities/situations when a person is:**
  - actively eating or drinking
  - actively playing indoor sports in a collegiate or professional sports setting
  - in the water at a swimming pool or aquatic facility
  - alone in an enclosed office
  - performing (e.g., singing, dancing, acting, playing an instrument), provided that performers maintain six feet of distance from audience members
  - giving a speech for broadcast or an audience, provided no one is within six feet of the speaker
  - **UPDATE:** teaching a large college or university class with auditorium-style seating, provided that no one is within 6 feet of the instructor
  - speaking to or translating for a deaf or hard of hearing person
  - required to use equipment for a job that precludes the wearing of a mask and the person is wearing or using that equipment, or when wearing a mask would endanger public safety
  - lawfully asked to remove their mask for facial recognition purposes
- **Travel:**
  - Fully vaccinated people **must** still wear a mask when on public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States (on an airplane, train, bus, taxi, ride-share vehicle, or at a transportation hub such as an airport or train station).
    - It is not necessary for fully vaccinated people to wear face masks in **outdoor** areas of a transportation conveyance (such as the open deck of a ferry, or the open-air upper deck of a double-decker bus.)
  - Fully vaccinated people do not need to test or quarantine after domestic travel, but still need to be tested 3 days after returning from an international destination. See the *Travel* guidance at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance).
- No one (including fully vaccinated people) should participate in activities with other people or leave their homes (except for medical care) if they are sick.
- Practicing good hand hygiene (with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer) before and after visits and other activities is still recommended.
- Fully vaccinated people should also follow COVID-19 policies of their employers, businesses, and other public settings.

### **Special recommendations for immunocompromised people<sup>2</sup>:**

- **UPDATE:** People who are immunocompromised may not be fully protected even if they are fully vaccinated. Because of this, **immunocompromised people should continue taking all the same precautions as unvaccinated people**, including:
  - **Wearing masks in indoor and many outdoor public settings**, avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces and staying 6 feet away from people they don't live with.
- Immunocompromised people are recommended to discuss their situation with their healthcare provider and to follow their advice.
- For more information, see *Mask Guidance for the General Public* at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance).

### **Who should not wear a mask:**

- Children younger than age 2
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove a mask without assistance.

- Small children may have difficulty wearing a mask properly for an extended period of time. In these circumstances, wearing a mask could be prioritized for times where social distancing is more difficult (e.g., when standing in line at school, carpool pickup and drop-off times).
- Some people with medical conditions or disabilities, including mental health conditions, may have difficulties wearing a mask and should consult with their healthcare provider for advice.

### Steps for those who are sick, test positive, or are exposed

- Fully vaccinated people who experience any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 should isolate, see their healthcare provider, get tested if indicated.
  - Symptoms of COVID-19 may include: fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Fully vaccinated people should isolate for 10 days after they test positive. For details, see *Guidance for Persons who Test Positive and their Household Members* at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance).
- **UPDATE:** Fully vaccinated people who are close contacts of someone with COVID-19 generally do not need to quarantine or be restricted from work, but they **should**:
  - Get a COVID-19 test 3-5 days after the date they were exposed. Isolate if the test is positive.
  - Wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after the date they were exposed.
  - Consider wearing a mask at home for 14 days if they live with someone who is immunocompromised.<sup>2</sup>
  - Monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days from their exposure, and isolate if they develop symptoms.
- Fully vaccinated people who do not have symptoms are not recommended to participate in routine screening testing.
- For more information, see *Guidance for Contacts of a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19* at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance).

### More information

- For answers to common questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, see COVID-19 Vaccine Information at [coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccine-information](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccine-information).

We are still learning more about:

- the Delta variant and other variant strains of the SARS-CoV-2 virus
- how long vaccines can protect people
- how long protection from re-infection lasts after a person has COVID-19
- how well the vaccines protect people with weakened immune systems
- whether the vaccines are safe and effective in children younger than age 12

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as the outbreak evolves. Please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov) regularly for the most current information.