

News Release

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Media Contacts:

Stacey Durgin Smith, Aitkin County Public Health: 218-927-7224

Lake County: LaReesa Sandretsky, (218) 934-8378, lareesa.sandretsky@co.lake.mn.us

COVID-19: what now?

You may be [confused](#) about current COVID-19 guidance. It continues to change quickly as more data becomes available and you may feel you are getting different information from different sources. Here is the latest.

The Centers for Disease Control strongly encourages all people to wear a mask when indoors, especially in areas where there is high transmission. The guidance was updated based on new evidence that is showing vaccinated persons may contract the delta variant and spread the virus. This change in guidance does not indicate that the vaccine is not working. The vaccine continues to do what all vaccines are created to do: prevent severe disease and death.

Many people have not yet chosen to be vaccinated, and many of those continue to get sick. Fortunately, most Minnesotans, and especially those who are at high risk due to age or other health conditions have chosen to be vaccinated, which has reduced the number of hospitalizations and deaths. Still, there are important things to remember.

- Though studies show that people who are vaccinated are still able spread the delta COVID-19 variant, it is much less likely that vaccinated people will get the disease.
- Though there have been “breakthrough cases” of vaccinated people, it is extremely rare for vaccinated persons to be hospitalized or die from COVID-19, less than .01%.
- Experts are evaluating the need for booster vaccinations.

Some people cannot get vaccinated, for example:

- Children under 12.
- Some people who are immunocompromised by a chronic disease.
- Some people who are taking cancer medications that compromise their immune system.
- Some people who are taking anti-rejection medications after an organ transplant.

Some people have not yet chosen to be vaccinated, citing concerns about the effects of the vaccine. VAERS, the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, is the United States’ vaccine

safety surveillance program overseen by CDC and FDA. VAERS collects and analyzes reports of adverse events that happen after any vaccination, including COVID-19 vaccinations. Vaccinated people can even use their smartphones to tell CDC about any side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine, through a program called V-Safe. Not every adverse event reported after vaccination will be due to the vaccination. Here is what we know from VAERS:

- Short-term side effects are a sore arm and the effects of your own immune system learning to fight COVID-19. These effects include headache, fever, muscle aches, fatigue and chills, but they only last for 1-2 days and will not put you in the hospital or lead to your death.
- Vaccine history shows that if a person is going to be adversely affected by a vaccine, it usually happens within two months.
- Approximately 200 million people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines under the most intense safety monitoring in U.S. history. Adverse reactions to the COVID-19 are extremely rare. They include anaphylaxis (2-5 per million), thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (39), myocarditis or pericarditis (1,249) and preliminarily reported Guillain-Barre Syndrome (143). You can learn about these reactions at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/adverse-events.html>.

If you are still not ready to get vaccinated for COVID-19, please take care of yourself and those around you. Continue to take precautions, so that you do not carry the disease to someone who cannot be vaccinated.

- Wear a clean, well-fitting mask over your nose and mouth.
- Stay 6 feet away from others in public and away from those in your home who have COVID, if possible.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily: tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- Monitor your health daily: be alert for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19. Take your temperature and contact your healthcare provider if symptoms develop. All of the messaging provided by the Arrowhead Region Public and Tribal Health group is based on guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Centers of Disease Control (CDC).

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For additional comments from local public health representatives, please contact:

Aitkin County: Stacey Durgin Smith, 218-838-3465, stacey.durgin@co.aitkin.mn.us

Carlton County: Michelle Janowiec, 218-391-0663, michelle.janowiec@co.carlton.mn.us

Cook County: Jodi Tervo Roberts, 218-216-7423, jodi.roberts@co.cook.mn.us

Itasca County: Kelly Chandler, 218-327-6144, Kelly.chandler@co.itasca.mn.us

Koochiching County: Derek Foss, 218-283-7070, Derek.Foss@co.koochiching.mn.us

Lake County: LaReesa Sandretsky, (218) 934-8378, lareesa.sandretsky@co.lake.mn.us or Tracy Gilsvik, Tracy.Gilsvik@co.lake.mn.us

St. Louis County: Aubrie Hoover, 218-929-1560, hoovera@stlouiscountymn.gov

Bois Forte: Louise Isham, 218-757-3261, lisham@boisforte-nsn.gov

Fond du Lac: Rita Aspinwall, 218-269-2379, RitaKarppinen@fdlrez.com

Grand Portage: Jenn Sorenson, 218-475-3007, jenns@grandportage.com

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe: Kris Jenson, 651-253-2659, Kris.jenson@millelacsband.com OR Vivian LaMoore, 320-630-8195, Vivian.lamoore@millelacsband.com