

What You Need to Know: COVID-19 Vaccination, Mask-Wearing, and Social Distancing



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On May 13, 2021 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) made significant changes to their guidance for mask-wearing based on accumulating data about COVID-19 infections in vaccinated and unvaccinated people. Governor Lamont also announced that **mask-wearing rules will be relaxed on May 19, 2021 for residents and visitors to Connecticut who are fully vaccinated.** A person is fully vaccinated when 14 days (2 weeks) have passed since their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine (i.e. their second Pfizer or Moderna dose or their first Johnson & Johnson dose).

What we already knew...



Based on scientific information

collected when the COVID-19 vaccines that are currently approved for use in the US were being developed, **it was clear that fully vaccinated people were much less likely to suffer from severe complications, hospitalization, or death if they became infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2).**

What we know now...



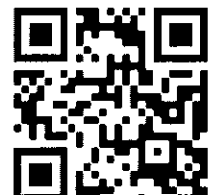
Based on new information

collected since COVID-19 vaccinations began in the US and other countries, we now know that even if they are exposed to people who have COVID-19, vaccinated people are very unlikely to become infected compared to unvaccinated people and, **even if they do become infected, fully vaccinated people are less likely to transmit virus to others** (even if those people are unvaccinated).



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What it means for Adults and Children...

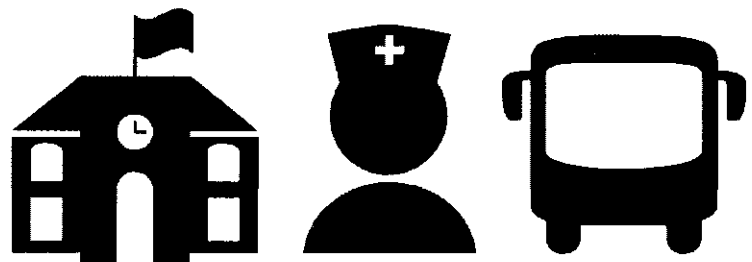


All People (vaccinated or unvaccinated)

- Need to **wear a mask when they are inside a school building** (pre-K-12) or childcare facility.
- Need to **wear a mask when they are inside a healthcare facility** (including doctors' offices, hospitals, emergency care settings, settings that provide physical/occupational therapy, and other patient care settings).
- Need to **wear a mask when they are inside an assisted living facility, a correctional facility, or other congregate living setting** (such as group homes and residential care homes, homeless and other shelters). Nursing homes must follow CMS requirements for mask use.
- Need to **wear a mask when they are at a transportation hub**, such as an airport, bus or train station, or **riding public or privately-hired transportation**, such as a train, bus, airplane, or ride-sharing services (such as Uber, Lyft, taxi).
- Need to **wear a mask if they are asked to do so in a public or private establishment**, if required by their employer in their workplace, or when organizers require masks at any event.

THIS IS BECAUSE:

- These settings may be more likely to have people there who are **not able to be vaccinated** due to young age or a health condition.
- These settings may be more likely to have people there who are at a **higher risk for severe complications** if they become infected.
- These settings may make it more **difficult for people to keep their distance** and may include unvaccinated and infected people.
- The **owner's or operator's preference** may be to exercise caution in protecting health without needing to keep people appropriately distanced or needing to determine whether or not a person is vaccinated.



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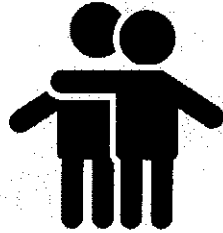


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What it means for Adults and Children...

If Vaccinated...



- Can feel comfortable with **no mask or social distancing** both indoors and outdoors.
- **Do not need to quarantine** from work, school, or away from other people if they are exposed to someone with COVID-19 and do not have any symptoms themselves.
- **Do not need to get tested** routinely (e.g., as part of their work), before or after travel, or when they are exposed to someone with COVID-19 and do not have any symptoms themselves.

THIS IS BECAUSE:

- Even if they are exposed to someone with COVID-19, they are **very unlikely to get infected.**
- Even if they get infected, they are **very unlikely to get sick** or have serious disease.
- Even if they get infected, they are **less likely to infect someone else.**

If Unvaccinated...



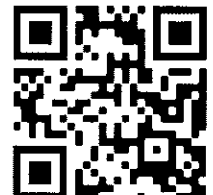
- Are required to **wear a mask indoors.**
- Should **continue to wear a mask outdoors** when they are in a crowd, at a large event, or in a public place where keeping their distance from others is difficult.
- Should **continue to quarantine** from work, school, and away from other people if they are exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Should **continue to get tested** when they are exposed to someone with COVID-19, before and after they travel, and if they are part of a screening testing program (e.g. as part of their work).

THIS IS BECAUSE:

- If they are exposed to someone with COVID-19, they are **at risk of getting infected.**
- If they become infected, they **can suffer from severe disease** and possibly be hospitalized.
- If they become infected, they **can transmit the virus to other people.**
- If they become infected, they can **pose a serious risk to other individuals** who are not yet vaccinated or cannot get vaccinated.



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What it means for Businesses...



Business Owners and Event Operators

- Should consider requiring customers to **wear a mask when they are inside an establishment or at a large indoor event or private gathering** if the space is not designed for continuous social distancing. If not specifically required, consider **posting signage indicating that unvaccinated customers are required to wear a mask** and any customer is invited to wear a mask if they are more comfortable doing so.
- Should consider requiring customers/attendees to **wear a mask when they are inside an establishment or at a large indoor event or private gathering** where there is likely to be a mix of vaccinated and unvaccinated people (including children younger than 12 years).
- Should consider requiring attendees to **wear a mask when at large outdoor events** open to the public and/or where large crowds are expected and unvaccinated people (including children younger than 12 years) are likely to be in attendance.
- Should require **employees to wear a mask if they are unvaccinated** or their vaccination status is unknown and they cannot maintain continuous separation from customers or coworkers.
- Should consider redesigning the space **inside an establishment or at a large indoor event or private gathering to allow for continuous social distancing** (or even extended distancing) when masks use may not be possible or practical (for example while eating/drinking or exercising).
- Should consider incorporating CDC's recommendations for **cleaning/disinfection, hand hygiene, and ventilation inside their establishments** to maximize safety for unvaccinated customers and staff.
- Should plan for **reduced capacity** (including denying entry to valid ticket holders) if a large outdoor event must be moved indoors and there are likely to be unvaccinated people (including children younger than 12 years) in attendance.

THIS IS BECAUSE:

- There is currently **no convenient, reliable, and consistent way to determine a person's COVID-19 vaccination status.**
- Many people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 **have no symptoms but can spread the virus to other people** who are not fully vaccinated.
- Even though community infection rates are declining in Connecticut, there are still **many vulnerable residents and communities** in the state who are not fully vaccinated and could be severely impacted by COVID-19.
- There is **a continuing risk that businesses and large events could be a source of significant COVID-19 outbreaks** in situations where universal masking is not in use, many people remain unvaccinated, and appropriate spacing between customers, attendees, and staff cannot be maintained.



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