

Urgent News Release #37

Richland County Health & Human Services
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UPDATED CDC GUIDANCE IN REPOSE TO THE DELTA VARIANT

Richland County – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued updated recommendations regarding COVID-19 preventive measures on July 28, 2021 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>). The updates were prompted by the fact the Delta variant, a highly infectious COVID-19 strain, is spreading more quickly than any other strain of COVID-19. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services and Richland County Public Health support the CDC's recommendations.

First and foremost, the best way to protect yourself, your family, and your community from COVID-19 and the Delta variant is to get vaccinated. From January 1, 2021 through July 22, 2021, over 98% of COVID-19 cases in Wisconsin occurred among people who were not fully vaccinated.

Key points from the latest CDC recommendations include:

- Everyone, including fully vaccinated people, should wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of [substantial or high transmission](#).
 - As of August 1, 2021, Richland County was deemed to be at a level of **substantial** transmission. Our office has experienced an increase in COVID-19 cases in the last week. The Health Department reports the total number of confirmed cases at 1,356. The number of active cases is 18 as of this morning (this represents a five-fold increase in the last few weeks).

- Everyone, including fully vaccinated people, may choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission, particularly if they are immunocompromised or at increased risk for severe disease from COVID-19, or if they have someone in their household who is immunocompromised, at increased risk of severe disease, or not fully vaccinated.
- Fully vaccinated people who have a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be tested 3-5 days after exposure, and should wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.
- CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status.

Why the change? The latest science shows that we need to change our behavior to respond to the Delta variant. The Delta variant is more contagious than previously known variants and can be spread despite vaccine status. This new knowledge requires the change in recommendations. It is important to remember that vaccinated individuals make up a very small percentage of transmission.

Data also shows that the highest spread of cases and severe outcomes is happening in places with low vaccination rates and among unvaccinated people. Some vaccinated people can get the Delta variant in a breakthrough infection and may be contagious. Even so, vaccinated individuals represent a very small amount of transmission occurring around the country. Virtually all hospitalizations and deaths continue to be among the unvaccinated.

So if people who are vaccinated are encouraged to wear masks, why should people continue to be vaccinated? High vaccination coverage still reduces the spread of the virus and also helps prevent new, and possibly more concerning, variants from emerging.

“Vaccination is the best way to protect you, your family, and our community”, stated Rose Kohout, Richland County Health Officer. “With the Delta variant, vaccination is more important than ever”, added Kohout.

Richland County has done well with getting vaccinated and residents are highly encouraged to continue to take advantage of local vaccine clinics to initiate or complete their series.

As of August 4, 2021 in Richland County:

Percent of residents with at least one dose:	50.4%
Percent of residents who have completed the vaccine series:	47.8%
Percent of adults (18+) with at least one dose:	60.7%
Percent of adults (18+) who have completed the vaccine series:	57.8%

“We all want to put this pandemic behind us and we will get through it by protecting ourselves and others with vaccination, wearing masks, avoiding crowds, and washing our hands. We also need to protect those who are most vulnerable and by using all the preventive measures we have available, we will be successful in doing just that”, added Kohout.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/news/releases/072821.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>

COVID-19 Vaccine Administration

Richland County continues to offer vaccine clinics every Wednesday from 8:30am-4:30pm at the Richland High School Auditorium area. You may schedule an appointment by calling Richland County Health & Human Services at 608-647-8821, however, no appointment is necessary. The Pfizer product is being provided to those 12 and over. If you have an adolescent who would like to get vaccinated, please know that persons under 18 must have a parent signature on the consent form and an adult (age 18 or older) must accompany them to the clinic.

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