



GUIDANCE FOR VACCINATED AND UNVACCINATED INDIVIDUALS

Page 1 of 3

The following is guidance for all vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

*Over the course of the pandemic, the Texas Department of State Health Services regularly monitors new data as it comes in and reviews the science to inform our guidance and decision-making. **Based on the latest science, we can say vaccination is the best tool we have to protect people and communities from COVID-19. Masks can add protection as part of a layered prevention strategy.***

A growing number of studies have shown:

- Vaccines are working. Studies show that they are effective in real-world settings in preventing severe disease, hospitalization, and death.
- Vaccines have proven to be effective against the variants currently circulating in the country, including the Delta variant.
- Unvaccinated people are more likely to be hospitalized or die from COVID-19 than people who are fully vaccinated.

Does this guidance apply to all settings?

This guidance does not apply to healthcare settings (e.g., hospitals, long-term care, doctors' offices). Guidance for residents and staff of healthcare settings can be found in the [Infection Control for Healthcare Personnel](#) and [Infection Control after Vaccination](#) sections of the CDC website. CDC is updating guidance for other settings.

Based on new CDC guidance, do I need to keep wearing a mask if I've had the COVID-19 vaccine?

Vaccinated or not, wearing a mask in indoor public spaces can help protect you and everyone close to you. You might choose to wear a mask in outdoor, crowded settings for added protection. As breakthrough cases are reported, DSHS continues to urge full vaccination. Full vaccination is the best defense against COVID-19 and its variants, like Delta. See [CDC's guidance for fully vaccinated people](#) for more information.

What does it mean to be "fully vaccinated"?

People are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer COVID-19 or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine

If you don't meet these requirements, regardless of your age, you are NOT fully vaccinated.

- If you have a condition or are taking medications that weaken your immune system, you may NOT be fully protected even if you are fully vaccinated. Talk to your healthcare provider to determine if an additional dose of vaccine is appropriate for you.



Does the vaccine protect me from variants?

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine provides protection against variants. Like any vaccine, COVID-19 vaccines do not stop 100% of cases. But fully vaccinated people are less likely to be infected. They are also protected from severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

How will people know if someone is vaccinated?

Your best defense is to get vaccinated yourself.

Vaccination data coverage by county is available on our website under the [Vaccine Data](#) tab.

I'm fully vaccinated. Are there safety precautions I still need to take?

Vaccinated or not, wearing a mask in indoor public spaces can help protect you and everyone close to you. In general, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings. Wear a mask in outdoor crowded settings if someone in your household is immunocompromised or at increased risk of severe disease.

The safety measures listed below can also help protect you from COVID-19:

- staying 6 feet from others not in your household
- frequent handwashing
- avoiding crowded indoor spaces

I'm fully vaccinated and know I've been around someone with COVID-19. Should I get tested?

If you are fully vaccinated, and do not have any symptoms of COVID-19, you do not need to quarantine at home. However, you should get tested 3–5 days after the exposure, even if you don't have symptoms, and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until your test result is negative.

I'm unvaccinated and know I've been around someone with COVID-19. What should I do?

If you've been within 6 feet of a person who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period, you should:

- stay home for 14 days after your last contact;
- watch for symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath;
- if possible, stay away from people you live with, especially those at high risk of getting very sick from COVID-19.

If symptoms develop, immediately contact your local public health department or healthcare provider.

I tested positive for COVID-19. What should I do?

Whether you are vaccinated or unvaccinated, if you have tested positive for COVID-19, you should isolate in order to protect others.

- If you do not develop symptoms, you can be around others after 10 days have passed since your positive viral test for COVID-19.
- If you have symptoms, you can be around others after:
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared, **and**
 - 24 hours with no fever and without using fever-reducing medicine, **and**
 - Other COVID-19 symptoms you have are improving.



Where can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

There are many ways to get vaccinated. The COVID-19 vaccines are widely available and free.

- To find the site closest to you, visit covidvaccine.texas.gov or the CDC's vaccines.gov
- Get answers to questions or help finding a vaccine near you by phone:
 - **Text** your ZIP code to find vaccine, childcare and free rides to clinics to
 - **GETVAX** (438829) for English
 - **VACUNA** (822862) for Spanish
 - **Call** 1-833-832-7067 (toll-free) for referral to a local vaccine provider
 - Call center is open Monday–Friday 8:00am–6:00pm, and Saturday 8:00am–5:00pm. Spanish language and other translators are available.
 - **Call** the national vaccine finder hotline toll free at 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489)