



The Louisiana Department of Health warns that COVID-19 cases among people who are not yet fully vaccinated are surging, and all people in Louisiana, especially those who are not yet vaccinated, are at an elevated risk of exposure to COVID-19 as the significantly more contagious Delta variant continues to spread. Delta is now the dominant strain of COVID in our country and region, making up most cases.

As of August 2, 2021, Louisiana now has the highest recent COVID case growth in the US. The White House has declared Louisiana a “State of Concern.” Louisiana is No. 1 in the country for per capita cases. The Delta variant is threatening the ability of Louisiana’s hospitals to deliver care as they become overwhelmed with patients. 83% of COVID cases are the Delta variant in our region.

NEW PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS LIVING IN LOUISIANA

With the Delta variant, our insufficient vaccination rate, the summer season, and school about to start, we are in the perfect storm. To minimize death and suffering in this fourth surge LDH has issued new guidance and is recommending all individuals take immediate precautions:

- **Statewide Mask Mandate** - Face masks that properly cover the wearer’s mouth and nose must be worn at all times in public indoor spaces. This includes all indoor spaces except personal residences.
The order requires face coverings for everyone of age to be enrolled in kindergarten and older except for the following:
 - Anyone who has a medical condition that prevents the wearing of a face covering
 - Anyone who is consuming a drink or food
 - Anyone who is trying to communicate with a person who is hearing impaired
 - Anyone who is giving a speech for broadcast or to an audience
 - Anyone temporarily removing his or her face covering for identification purposes
- All businesses should review their operations to accommodate employees in a way that reduces unnecessary contact to avoid the spread of COVID in the workplace. This includes going back to remote work if necessary.
- All people should take a COVID test immediately after a known or suspected exposure to COVID-19.
 - If positive, they should isolate immediately.
 - If negative, they should retest again between five and seven days post-exposure.
 - If they develop symptoms of COVID-19 at any point they should test and immediately isolate pending the results.

Our vaccination rate of 43.3% is insufficient to slow the spread of the virus. The variant’s emergence before we reached higher vaccination rates has put us in the perfect storm.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why is the Delta variant more dangerous than the others?

A: The Delta variant is the most transmissible variant yet. It’s faster, fitter, and it’s now the dominant COVID strain in the country and Louisiana. If you’re unvaccinated, you are the most vulnerable to this dangerous strain. The overwhelming number of cases and hospitalizations are among unvaccinated individuals. According to the CDC, over 97 percent of people who are entering the hospital right now are unvaccinated. If you’re vaccinated, you have very good (but not absolute) protection against severe outcomes - hospitalization and death.

Q: If I am vaccinated, do I need to worry about the Delta variant?

A: The COVID vaccines offer protection against the Delta variant, but vaccinated residents can still pass the virus to vulnerable groups and those who are unvaccinated. Vaccinated individuals represent a very small number of those hospitalized with COVID around the country.

Q: Where can I receive a vaccine?

A: The vaccine is available at over 1,400 providers across the state. These providers include national and independent pharmacies, public health providers, clinics and physician offices, hospitals and others. For vaccine information or to schedule an appointment with a local provider, call 855-453-0774.

| PROTECTED FROM | VACCINATED | UNVACCINATED |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| Severe Symptoms | ✓ | ✗ |
| Hospitalization | ✓ | ✗ |
| Death | ✓ | ✗ |