

Our goal is to have a safe school year, and the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) recognizes the importance of in-person learning for our children. To accomplish this goal, the Indiana Department of Health strongly recommends the following guidance on vaccination, masking and social distancing.

On July 27, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provided important updates on the state of the COVID-19 pandemic and Delta variant. The high-level findings and [updated recommendations](#) are summarized below:

- **Getting vaccinated** prevents severe illness, hospitalization, and death; it also helps reduce the spread of the virus in communities.
- **Data show the Delta variant is different than past versions of the virus:** it is much more contagious.
- In areas with substantial and high community transmission, **CDC recommends that everyone (including fully vaccinated individuals) wear a mask in public indoor settings** to help prevent spread of the Delta variant and protect others.
- **CDC recommends that community leaders, including school officials, encourage vaccination and masking** to prevent further outbreaks in areas of substantial and high transmission.
- **CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status**, and layered prevention to remain safe for in-person learning.

Furthermore, the CDC recommends that anyone who is ill should be tested regardless of vaccination status. People who are fully vaccinated and who have been exposed should now get tested, a change from previous guidance, and should wear a mask until a negative test result is received but do not have to quarantine. Early childhood education guidance has great flexibility due to the variety of settings; providers can consider universal masking, if feasible, for children age 2 years and older regardless of community transmission.

Communicable Disease Laws

In Indiana, communicable disease laws require individuals, schools, healthcare settings and others to comply with disease intervention activities, called control measures, to help stop the spread of disease. Pursuant to IC 16-41-2-1, the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) is required to publish a [list](#) of reportable communicable diseases and their control measures on its website, and those diseases listed must be reported, investigated, and mitigated as appropriate. The [control measures](#) for COVID-19 to be followed by schools are also posted on the IDOH website. These control measures include case and contact reporting, contact tracing, isolation of positive cases, and quarantining of close contacts as necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In addition to the health and safety reasons for following the CDC's guidance, school districts that decide not to follow the CDC's guidance should consult with their insurers and attorneys regarding risk assumption and liability coverage. Insurers may be unwilling to cover liabilities created as a result of failure to adhere to public health guidance.

Communication Tools


IDOH encourages you to share these graphics in your social media or electronic newsletters when communicating broadly to your local communities and families about the importance of vaccination and masking:

ARE VACCINES EFFECTIVE?

Yes! Getting vaccinated prevents severe illness, hospitalization, and death; it also helps reduce the spread of the virus in communities.

With the Delta variant, vaccination is more urgent than ever.



Protected from	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated
Severe Symptoms	✓	✗
Hospitalization	✓	✗
Death	✓	✗



cdc.gov/coronavirus

WHAT SHOULD SCHOOLS DO?

CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place.






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SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE DELTA VARIANT?

New data show Delta is different than past versions of the virus: it is much more contagious.



- Vaccinated people can get breakthrough infections of Delta variant and may be contagious.
- Vaccinated individuals represent a very small amount of total transmission.

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WHAT SHOULD COMMUNITIES DO?

Community leaders should encourage vaccination and masking to prevent further outbreaks, especially in areas of substantial or high transmission.

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DO I NEED TO WEAR A MASK?

In areas of substantial or high transmission, everyone should wear a mask in public indoor settings to help prevent the spread of Delta variant and protect others.




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More Delta Variant information from the CDC:

Delta variant is much more transmissible than the original (wildtype) virus.

- Delta spreads more than twice as easily from one person to another, compared to earlier strains.
- Delta has most recently surged to become the predominant variant – from fewer than 1% in May to more than 80% of cases nationally in July.
- Delta is causing more vaccine breakthrough infections, meaning infections in fully vaccinated people, than other strains have. However, most breakthrough infections are mild, and very few people develop breakthrough infections compared with the total number of people vaccinated.
- Emerging science suggests some vaccinated people can be contagious if they get Delta.
- For these reasons, CDC recommends that vaccinated people should wear a mask in public indoor settings to prevent spread and protect themselves and others in areas of substantial or high community transmission.
- Vaccines are still very effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalizations and death from COVID-19. If you get vaccinated, your risk of infection is about 3.5-times lower, your risk of getting ill from COVID is over 8-times lower, and your risk of hospitalization or death is about 25-times lower.

