

Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department



Web: health.hamiltontn.org

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

July 28, 2021

Health Department Revises Masking Recommendations Following Updated CDC Guidelines; Provides Updated School Recommendations; Resources for Businesses; Upcoming Vaccination Events

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – In alliance with [updated guidelines](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Hamilton County Health Department recommends that both fully vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals wear masks in public indoor settings. Breakthrough cases are possible, and preliminary evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people who do become infected with the COVID-19 Delta variant can spread the virus to others. For this reason, the CDC recommends that fully vaccinated people wear a mask in areas of [substantial or high transmission](#); transmission in Hamilton County is high, and daily case counts are increasing. As the Delta variant continues to spread rapidly, it is important to exercise caution in areas where social distancing cannot be maintained. Due to the low rate of vaccination in Hamilton County, many community members are still at risk of serious infection.

“We want to reiterate that vaccines are highly effective, however, it is in the best interest of our community that everyone, regardless of vaccination status, wears masks in public spaces at this time,” says Health Department Administrator Becky Barnes. “Although the risk of transmission from a vaccinated individual is low, many people in Hamilton County are still unvaccinated and, therefore, are at high risk of developing severe illness. Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself and those around you.”

Mitigation efforts such as physical distancing and handwashing should continue. Vaccination remains the best way to prevent severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. Vaccines are widely accessible and available for everyone 12 years and older. High vaccination rates are needed to eliminate mask wearing and social distancing.

School Recommendations

At this time, the Hamilton County Health Department strongly recommends that all individuals wear masks in school settings. New CDC guidance emphasizes the importance of wearing masks to reduce transmission in schools. Many school-aged children are not yet eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, leaving them susceptible to infection. To ensure that students and teachers are able to safely participate in in-person instruction, it is recommended that all wear masks and practice social distancing when possible.

Resources for Businesses

Businesses are encouraged to take action now and implement these masking recommendations to slow the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant. Businesses wishing to require masks may visit the [Print Resources webpage](#) to access signage provided by the Health Department. Signage is available in English and Spanish.

For additional resources and guidance, call the COVID-19 Hotline at 423-209-8383.

Upcoming Health Department Vaccination Events

Free Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination events will be offered at multiple locations this week. No appointment is necessary, and anyone 12 years of age and older is eligible. Visit vaccine.hamiltontn.gov and click on “Vaccine Calendar of Events” to see the most up-to-date COVID-19 vaccine calendar. To accelerate the vaccination process, print and complete the [vaccine encounter form](#) available on the website.

The COVID-19 Hotline is available to assist with COVID-19 vaccine inquiries Monday through Friday, 8am to 4pm, at 423-209-8383.

This press release is available in Spanish on the Health Department’s Spanish Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/SaludHamiltonTN>

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