

# Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department



Web: [health.hamiltontn.org](http://health.hamiltontn.org)

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

July 21, 2021

## **Health Department Monitoring Increase in COVID-19 Cases; Upcoming Vaccination Events**

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Hamilton County Health Department has been monitoring the steady increase in COVID-19 infections over the last four weeks. In the last 14 days, Hamilton County has seen a 218% jump in new COVID-19 cases. Over 50% of these new cases have occurred in people under the age of 30. Hospitalization rates are also rising, with a 200% increase in Hamilton County from the previous 14-day period.

Additionally, there have been confirmed cases of the Delta SARS-CoV-2 variant in Hamilton County and many across the state of Tennessee. The Delta variant is the most contagious variant of coronavirus worldwide and is spreading significantly faster than the original version of the virus.

[Studies show](#) higher rates of household transmission of the Delta variant compared to the previously dominant Alpha variant. This signifies that when one member of a group or family becomes infected, the Delta variant will rapidly spread to other unvaccinated members of the group. The Health Department has identified this increased transmissibility locally; in particular, an event with two infectious attendees resulted in 19 positive COVID-19 cases and 9 additional household contacts.

Vaccination rates remain low, with only 42% of Hamilton County fully vaccinated. This is a major factor in the recent spike of COVID-19 infections, and it leaves a high percentage of the population vulnerable. Unvaccinated individuals have no defense against the Delta variant, and those that are partially vaccinated are less vulnerable but not robustly protected. Fully vaccinated people are highly protected against the Delta variant.

“As we are seeing this increase in COVID-19 cases, we want to emphasize the importance of getting vaccinated,” says Health Department Administrator Becky Barnes. “With school starting soon, we urge all age eligible persons to get vaccinated so that schools can operate as normally as possible. Vaccines prevent severe illnesses and death, and it is the best way to protect our community against COVID-19.”

Unvaccinated and partially vaccinated individuals should continue to wear masks and practice social distancing. Please seek testing if you are experiencing the following [symptoms](#) or have been in close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting

- Diarrhea

To locate a free testing location in Hamilton County, visit our [website](#) or 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](https://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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