

IMMUNIZATION COVID-19 UPDATE

ISSUE NO 25 | JULY 28, 2021



VACCINE DOSES
ADMINISTERED IN
LOUISIANA

3,483,291

NEW MASKING
AND TESTING
ADVISORY DUE TO
INCREASE IN
COVID-19 CASES

The LDH issued an advisory to notify clinicians of updates for masking and SARS-CoV-2 testing. (Page 2)

5 THINGS TO
KNOW ABOUT
COVID-19 AND
THE DELTA
VARIANT

CDC gives key messages and recommendations about the Delta variant. (Page 2-3)

QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

This week, Louisiana reported one of the largest single-day case counts of COVID-19 cases. This recent surge has happened over a few days, while past surges occurred over several weeks. With so many people now vaccinated, what is driving this sudden increase in cases?

The 6,797 new COVID-19 cases reported on Monday, July 26, was the second-highest single-day case count since January 6 of this year.

State health officials believe this sudden surge is due to the Delta variant. A variant is a change or a mutation of a virus that allows the virus to sustain itself. Some variants are stronger than the original virus while others are weaker and disappear. The Delta variant was first discovered in India last December and has spread rapidly, arriving in the U.S. in March.

The Delta variant spreads more easily and quickly than other variants. Health officials believe this strong variant, combined with (still) large numbers of unvaccinated people and people no longer using masks or social distancing, is the reason behind the sudden surge of COVID-19 cases.

For more information on the Delta variant, visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

WEEKLY COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

Here is an overview of major updates that occurred over the week.

New Recommendations for Masking and Testing Due to an Alarming Increase in COVID-19 Cases



The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) is issued an advisory to notify clinicians of updates to LDH recommendations for masking and SARS-CoV-2 testing.

COVID-19 transmission continues to sharply increase throughout

Louisiana. The increasing transmission is attributable to the predominant circulation of the highly transmissible Delta (B.1.617.2) SARS-CoV-2 variant of concern, which now accounts for 84% of the circulating lineages in the state. Because of the widespread circulation of the Delta variant, coupled with comparatively low vaccination rates, Louisiana is experiencing alarming increases in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, emergency department visits, and outbreaks.

- The number of new cases diagnosed each day in Louisiana has been increasing since June 16, and the statewide average daily number of cases per 100,000 residents has increased 208% over the past 14 days.
- Statewide percent positivity of new COVID-19 tests conducted is now 8.7%, up from 6.3% last week.
- The number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 throughout Louisiana has been increasing since July 1, with 749 additional hospitalized patients added during that time. This represents a four-fold from three weeks ago.
- The number of emergency department visits related to COVID-like illness has been significantly increasing throughout the state. Patients presenting with COVID-like illness now account for 8% of emergency department visits, compared to 3% at the beginning of July.
- During the past 2 weeks, 73 new outbreaks and 434 new outbreak-associated cases have been identified. This represents a 204% increase in the number of reported outbreaks and a 184% increase in the number of outbreak-associated cases compared to the previous 2 weeks.

MASKING

In light of uncontrolled COVID-19 transmission throughout Louisiana, and as we learn more about the transmission dynamics of Delta breakthrough cases, LDH now recommends all

people, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask while indoors if 6 feet of physical distance cannot be maintained.

TESTING

Early detection of COVID-19 infections remains an important public health priority. The following people should be tested for COVID-19:

- All people should be tested immediately after a known or suspected exposure to COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status. If negative, they should retest between 5-7 days post-exposure.
- All people who have symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested, including those who are fully vaccinated. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:
 - Fever, 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, and diarrhea.

VACCINATION

COVID-19 vaccines are effective against the Delta variant, and though it's still possible to get infected, the vaccines dramatically reduce the risk of serious illness that leads to hospitalization or death.

COVID-19 vaccination should be highly recommended for all eligible unvaccinated people.

To read more on the new recommendations for masking and testing, visit covidvaccine.la.gov.

CDC Recommendations: 5 Top Things to Know About COVID-19 and The Delta Variant

Below are 5 key messages and recommendations about the Delta variant from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

1. **Getting vaccinated** prevents severe illness, hospitalization, and death; it also helps reduce the spread of the virus in communities.
 - Unvaccinated individuals should get vaccinated and continue masking until they are fully vaccinated.
 - With the Delta variant, this is more urgent than ever. The highest spread of cases and severe outcomes are happening in places with low vaccination rates.
2. **Data show Delta is different than past versions of the virus:** it is much more contagious.
 - Some vaccinated people can get Delta in a breakthrough infection and may be contagious.
 - Even so, vaccinated individuals represent a very small amount of transmission occurring around the country.
 - Virtually all hospitalizations and deaths continue to be among the unvaccinated.

3. In areas with substantial and high transmission, **CDC recommends that everyone (including fully vaccinated individuals) wear a mask in public indoor settings** to help prevent the spread of Delta and protect others.
4. **CDC recommends that community leaders encourage vaccination and masking** to prevent further outbreaks in areas of substantial and high transmission.
5. **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.

For more information on CDC recommendations, visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Recommendations on Anti-SARS-CoV-2 Antibody Products

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines Panel has issued updated guidance for the use of Anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody products. Below are a few highlights of the NIH recommendations on Anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody products.

Anti-SARS-CoV-2 Monoclonal Antibodies

The COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines Panel (the Panel) recommends using one of the following anti-SARS-CoV-2 monoclonal antibodies to treat outpatients with mild to moderate COVID-19 who are at high risk of clinical progression, as defined by the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) criteria:

- **Casirivimab plus imdevimab**; or
- **Sotrovimab**.

At this time, the Panel **recommends against** using **bamlanivimab plus etesevimab (AIII)** because the P.1 (Gamma) and B.1.351 (Beta) variants of concern, which have reduced susceptibility to both bamlanivimab and etesevimab, represent an increasing proportion of the circulating variants in the United States.

COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma

The Panel **recommends against** the use of **low-titer COVID-19 convalescent plasma** for the treatment of COVID-19 (AIIb). Low-titer COVID-19 convalescent plasma is no longer authorized through the convalescent plasma EUA.

For complete, detailed treatment guidance, visit [covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov](https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov).



LOUISIANA COVID-19 VACCINE DEMOGRAPHICS

SERIES COMPLETED BY RACE:

- **White:** 58.5%
- **Black:** 29.16%
- **American Indian:** 0.34%
- **Asian:** 3.01%
- **Native Hawaiian:** 0.21%
- **Unknown:** 1.62%
- **Other:** 7.16%

SERIES COMPLETED BY AGE:

- **5-17:** 2.66%
- **18-29:** 10.51%
- **30-39:** 11.76%
- **40-49:** 13.1%
- **50-59:** 17.62%
- **60-69:** 21.83%
- **70+:** 22.51%

SERIES COMPLETED BY GENDER:

- **Female:** 55.13%
- **Male:** 44.6%
- **Unknown:** 0.27%

All breakdowns shown here are for Louisiana residents only. Race data completeness is expected to improve as we continue our outreach with vaccine providers.

Good Reads

CDC changes course on indoor masks in some parts of the U.S. – This article talks about how the CDC is recommending that even vaccinated people return to wearing masks indoors in parts of the U.S.

Read more at [apnews.com](https://www.apnews.com).

White House considering vaccine mandate for federal workers – This article talks about how the White House is strongly considering requiring federal employees to show proof of vaccination against the coronavirus.

Read more at [apnews.com](https://www.apnews.com).

Ex-FDA chief predicts CDC mask guidance will have a negligible impact – This article talks about how the former FDA commissioner believes the updated CDC mask guidance will have a negligible impact on the spread of the Delta variant.

Read more at [axios.com](https://www.axios.com).