



# COVID-19

To maximize protection from the [Delta variant](#) and prevent possibly spreading it to others, get vaccinated as soon as you can and wear a mask indoors in public if you are in [an area of substantial or high transmission](#).

## How COVID-19 Spreads

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COVID-19 spreads when an infected person breathes out droplets and very small particles that contain the virus. These droplets and particles can be breathed in by other people or land on their eyes, noses, or mouth. In some circumstances, they may contaminate surfaces they touch. People who are closer than 6 feet from the infected person are most likely to get infected.

COVID-19 is spread in three main ways:

- Breathing in air when close to an infected person who is exhaling small droplets and particles that contain the virus.
- Having these small droplets and particles that contain virus land on the eyes, nose, or mouth, especially through splashes and sprays like a cough or sneeze.
- Touching eyes, nose, or mouth with hands that have the virus on them.

### Delta Variant

The Delta variant causes more infections and spreads faster than earlier forms of the virus that causes COVID-19. It might cause more severe illness than previous strains in unvaccinated people.

- Vaccines continue to reduce a person's risk of contracting the virus that cause COVID-19, including this variant.
- Vaccines continue to be highly effective at preventing hospitalization and death, including against this variant.
- Fully vaccinated people with breakthrough infections from this variant appear to be infectious for a shorter period.
- Get vaccinated and wear masks indoors in public spaces to reduce the spread of this variant.

[About the Delta Variant](#)

[Variants in the US](#)

## Protect Yourself and Others

Anyone infected with COVID-19 can spread it, even if they do **NOT** have symptoms.

## What You Need to Know

- If you are not fully vaccinated and 2 or older, you should wear a mask in indoor public places.
- In areas with [high numbers of COVID-19 cases](#), consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with close


contact with others who are not fully vaccinated.

- Otherwise, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings.

Learn more about what you can do to [protect yourself and others](#) and what you can do after you've been [fully vaccinated](#).

## COVID-19 and Animals

COVID-19 can spread **from people to animals** in some situations. Pet cats and dogs can sometimes become infected after close contact with people with COVID-19. Learn what you should do [if you have pets](#).



### COVID-19 County Check

Find community transmission levels by county.

Select a Location

## Food and Water

### Food

There is no evidence to suggest that handling food or consuming food is associated with COVID-19. Follow *food* safety guidelines when handling and cleaning fresh produce. Do not wash produce with soap, bleach, sanitizer, alcohol, disinfectant or any other chemical.

### Drinking Water

There is also no current evidence that people can get COVID-19 by drinking water. The COVID-19 virus has not been detected in drinking water. Conventional water treatment methods that use filtration and disinfection, such as those in most municipal drinking water systems, should remove or kill the virus that causes COVID-19.

### Natural Bodies of Water (Lakes, Oceans, Rivers)

There are no scientific reports of the virus that causes COVID-19 spreading to people through the water in lakes, oceans, *rivers*, or other natural bodies of water.

### Wastewater

Genetic material from has been found in [untreated wastewater](#). There is little evidence of infectious virus in *wastewater*, and no information to date that anyone has become sick with COVID-19 because of exposure to *wastewater*. *Wastewater* treatment plants use chemical and other disinfection processes to remove and degrade many viruses and bacteria. COVID-19 is inactivated by the disinfection methods used in *wastewater* treatment.

#### More Information

[Scientific Brief: SARS-CoV-2 and Potential Airborne Transmission](#)

[ASL Video Series: How does COVID-19 Spread?](#)