



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Illinois Fully Aligns with New CDC Masking Recommendations**

*Delta variant spreading twice as easily from person to person as previous strains making vaccinations even more important*

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced today it is fully adopting updated Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) masking recommendations to protect against COVID-19 and the Delta variant. CDC recommends that everyone, including fully vaccinated individuals, wear a mask in public indoor setting in areas with substantial and high transmission. CDC is also recommending universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.

“While data continues to show the effectiveness of the three COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized in the U.S., including against the Delta variant, we are still seeing the virus rapidly spread among the unvaccinated,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “Cases and hospitalizations due to COVID-19 both continue to increase, overwhelmingly among the unvaccinated, but the risk is greater for everyone if we do not stop the ongoing spread of the virus and the Delta variant. We know masking can help prevent transmission of COVID-19 and its variants. Until more people are vaccinated, we join CDC in recommending everyone, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask indoors in areas of substantial and high transmissions, and in K-12 schools.”

According to CDC, data show the Delta variant is much more contagious. Delta spreads more than twice as easily from one person to another compared to other strains. According to CDC, the Delta variant is causing some vaccine breakthrough infections, but even so, most breakthrough infections are mild, and the vaccines are preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

Areas of substantial transmission are considered by CDC to be those with 50 to 99 cases per 100,000 people over a 7-day period. Areas of high transmission are considered to be those with more than 100 cases per 100,000 people over a 7-day period. The community level of transmission can be found here <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>.

IDPH will be updating school FAQs and other guidance posted online to reflect the latest CDC [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#).

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