

**The Alabama Department of Public Health  
Alabama Emergency Response Technology (ALERT)  
Health Alert Network (HAN)  
July 28, 2021**

## **COVID-19 Masking Update and the Delta Variant**

Alabama is seeing increasing daily cases of COVID-19 and hospitalizations. The Delta variant is now believed to make up over 80 percent of all cases of COVID-19 within the state of Alabama. Alabama is seeing substantial, high-transmission with 60 counties high risk or very high risk. As of July 27, there are 1,083 persons hospitalized in Alabama with positive case numbers exceeding 2000 per day. Of the **2379** COVID-19 deaths reported during 1/19/2021-06/30/2021\*, **25** were reported among those identified to be fully-vaccinated.

\*1/19/2021 marks the date when the first individual receiving the vaccine was considered fully- vaccinated (14 days after completion of the vaccination series).

### **What we know about the Delta Variant?**

The emerging evidence about the Delta variant shows that it is different from earlier versions of the virus; much more contagious, easier to spread, and with higher viral loads. There is evidence now that unlike the Alpha strain, persons who are fully-vaccinated might be infectious and thus might potentially spread the virus to others.

### **What has changed and what is the updated guidance?**

As a result of the spread of the Delta variant nationwide, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone, including persons fully-vaccinated, wear a mask in all indoor settings to help prevent the spread of the Delta variant to protect others.

CDC also recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 regardless of their vaccination status.

### **What can we do to reduce the spread of COVID-19?**

The best tool we have to reduce the spread of COVID-19 continues to be the COVID-19 vaccines. Getting fully-vaccinated prevents severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths from COVID-19 infection in more than 97 percent of persons vaccinated. The COVID-19 vaccination rate in Alabama remains very low and is insufficient to prevent continued, widespread transmission. Alabama has the lowest vaccination rates in the U.S. and now has one of the highest transmission rates in the U.S. Alabama had a 16.6% positivity rate as of July 24, which exceeded the 16.2% positivity rate reported on January 10.

In addition, the updated mask guidance should be followed with all persons wearing masks indoors regardless of vaccination status in order to protect others.

All providers are encouraged to visit the ADPH COVID-19 Data Hub at [Alabama COVID-19 Dashboard Hub](https://alabamapublichealth.com/covid-19) (shortened link: [arcg.is/0brSGj](https://arcg.is/0brSGj))

## **Monoclonal Antibody COVID-19 Treatment for Non-hospitalized Patients**

ADPH continues to receive reports of persons not being tested or referred for COVID-19 testing who are symptomatic in addition to persons not being treated who appear to meet the high-risk qualification for treatment. Regardless of whether a patient has a prior history of COVID-19 infection and/or are fully-vaccinated, all persons with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection should be tested. All persons who are positive, have mild to moderate symptoms not requiring hospitalization, and are at high-risk for complications from COVID-19 infection, should be treated with COVID-19 monoclonal antibody treatment.

Please review the prior HAN Alert sent out on July 22 for information on dosing, qualifications, and ordering of COVID-19 Monoclonal Antibody Treatment at [COVID-19 Update on Testing, Sequencing and Non-hospitalized Patient Treatment](#)

### **For full PDF of CDC Health Advisory**

View the PDF of CDC Health Advisory: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2021/pdf/CDC-HAN-447-COVID-19-Vaccine-to-Prevent-Outbreak-and-Variants-07-27-2021.pdf>