



Douglas County Public Health

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19: Fully Vaccinated People Can Resume Activities Without Wearing a Mask

According to newly updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), fully vaccinated people can resume activities they did before the COVID-19 pandemic, including participating in indoor and outdoor activities – large and small – without wearing a mask or physically distancing *except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.*

Why this is important: In the past year more than 4,000 people tested positive for COVID-19 in Douglas County and 39 people have died. More than 150 people were hospitalized and thousands quarantined as a result of being exposed to the disease.

Currently authorized vaccines in the United States are highly effective at protecting vaccinated people against symptomatic and severe COVID-19. Additionally, research suggests that fully vaccinated people are less likely to have asymptomatic infection or transmit SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) to others.

About 48% of Douglas County residents have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine and only 41% have been fully vaccinated. A person is considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 if it has been two or more weeks since they received the last dose of vaccine, which allows time for immunity to develop. Unvaccinated residents continue to be at risk of severe illness and death associated with COVID-19 and the variants that continue to circulate in Wisconsin and across the country.

There are important exceptions to the new guidelines:

Masks should continue to be used by all people in health care settings, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, and on buses, trains, and planes. *Additionally, those who are not yet vaccinated should continue to wear masks and physically distance in public as they are most at risk of becoming infected and spreading the virus.* People with weakened immune systems should consult their health care provider.

Fully vaccinated people no longer need to be tested following a known exposure unless they are residents or employees of a correctional or detention facility or a homeless shelter, according to the new CDC guidance.

Where can you get a free vaccine? COVID-19 vaccines are now widely available in Douglas County. The Community Clinic at the Wessman Arena is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11am to 7pm. No appointment is necessary. This clinic serves people 12 years and older. Information about other local vaccine clinics can be found online at vaccines.gov.

Check the Douglas County web page for updates and alerts.

- Douglas County COVID-19 Dashboard: <https://www.douglascountywi.org/1124/COVID-19-Updates>
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services COVID-19 : <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19>