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THE COUNTY RECOMMENDS MASKING INDOORS FOR EVERYONE *Precautionary Measure Against Increased Circulation of COVID-19*

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – The County of Santa Barbara Recommends Masking Indoors for Everyone, as a Precaution Against Increased Circulation of COVID-19. As of July 16, Santa Barbara's reported daily case rate is now 3.6 per 100,000 and rising. With cases of COVID-19 rising locally and increased circulation of the highly transmissible Delta variant, the County of Santa Barbara recommends that everyone, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks indoors in public places as an extra precautionary measure for those who are fully vaccinated, and to ensure easy verification that all unvaccinated people are masked in those settings.

As of July, the Delta variants comprised 50 percent of all specimens sequenced in California, and continues to rise. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) noted that Delta variants are now responsible for 58 percent of new infections across the country.

Fully vaccinated people are well-protected from infections and serious illness due to known COVID-19 variants including Delta variants, and vaccinating as many people as possible, as soon as possible, continues to be our best defense against severe COVID-19 infection, and the harm it can do to our region. Vaccines are safe, effective, free, and widely available to everyone 12 and older.

Out of an abundance of caution, people are recommended to wear masks indoors in settings like grocery or retail stores, theaters, and family entertainment centers, even if they are fully vaccinated as an added layer of protection for unvaccinated residents. Businesses are urged to adopt universal masking requirements for customers entering indoor areas of their businesses to provide better protection to their employees and customers. Workplaces must comply with Cal/OSHA requirements and fully vaccinated employees are encouraged to wear masks indoors if their employer has not confirmed the vaccination status of those around them.

“It remains critically important that we continue to practice safety guidelines such as staying home if feeling ill, wear a mask in public indoor settings, avoid crowded events, and practice good hand hygiene,” said Dr. Henning Ansorg, County Health Officer. For masks to work properly, they need to completely cover your nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of your face and around your nose.

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department will revisit this recommendation in the coming weeks as they continue to monitor transmission rates, hospitalizations, deaths, and increasing vaccination rates throughout the region. Santa Barbara data can be monitored [here](#).

“We have a method of preventing severe illness and hospitalization from the COVID-19 Delta variant which we know is effective, and that is getting vaccinated,” said Santa Barbara

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Public Health Director Dr. Van Do-Reynoso. “It remains critical for protection against infection, especially with circulating variants.”

People are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. People with only one vaccine dose of Pfizer or Moderna not fully protected. Completion of the vaccine series is necessary to provide full protection.

Visit our [website](#) to learn where you can find a vaccination site near you or call 2-1-1. If you missed your second dose, please find a vaccination clinic near you.

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County of Santa Barbara: www.CountyofSB.org, [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

2-1-1 Call Center: Dial 211 if calling from within the county; or call (800) 400-1572 if calling from outside the area.

Community Wellness Team Information and Referral Line: (805) 364-2750