



Town of New Castle, NH
Settled 1623
Incorporated 1693

COVID Update July 27, 2021

Unfortunately, it is high time for an update. I am going to give you some basic information. Much is still evolving, and case rates have been increasing in the US.

1) **First, some data on local vaccination rates.** 72% of adults in New Castle are vaccinated. This compares to 61.4% in Portsmouth, 62.7% in Rye, 56.3% in North Hampton, 75.8% in Exeter, 60.1% in Dover, 47.2% in Rochester, and 29% in Durham.

2) **Recently it has been said that the pandemic is going in the wrong direction- from CNN**

That's the message Dr. Anthony Fauci gave this past weekend as cases continued their upward trend and many eligible people refused to get vaccinated.

"It's like you have two kinds of America," Fauci said on CNN's "State of the Union." "You have the very vulnerable unvaccinated part and you have the really relatively protected vaccinated part. If you are vaccinated, you are in a very different category than someone who is not vaccinated."

Despite many officials' encouragement and experts warning that the best protection from the virus comes from vaccinations, only 49.1% of the U.S. population is vaccinated, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

If a large swath of people remains resistant to vaccination, a US official said recently, the U.S. is left with two options to control the spread: shut down businesses — which few people want to do — or return to masks. "The only way to get the unvaccinated to mask up is to mask everyone up," the same US official recently said.

The message is to please, please get vaccinated if you have not been already. Here is the URL to find out where you can currently receive a vaccine:
<https://www.vaccines.nh.gov/>

3) **The CDC has recommended mask wearing in indoor spaces again in many parts of the country.**

Two months ago, the CDC said vaccinated people did not need to wear masks in most indoor spaces, a move that seemed to signal a winding down of the pandemic. But yesterday, as the Delta variant of the virus pushed up infection rates across the country, the agency revised its guidelines: **Vaccinated people should again wear masks in public indoor spaces in parts of the country where the virus is surging.** Surging is defined as "substantial or high" levels of transmission. The threshold for this is 50 new cases per 100,000 people in a

7-day period. That currently includes about two-thirds of all US counties, but per Governor Sununu, no New Hampshire counties at this time.

Rockingham county's 14 day rate (not 7 day rate) is 51/100,00 with 158 new cases in the last 14 days. Strafford County's 14 day rate is 42.9/100,000. (Belknap county's is 86.5). I will be monitoring this closely and quite possibly recommending mask wearing locally in indoor spaces again if this surge continues.

4) Why is it being recommended that even vaccinated people wear masks in indoor spaces in most parts of the country?

The short answer is The Delta variant of the COVID virus

It has become increasingly clear that the Delta variant causes more breakthrough infections than scientists had originally expected. Breakthrough infections are COVID infections in people who are fully vaccinated.

We are also hearing more reports of vaccinated people who got infected and are symptomatic rather than asymptomatic.

There is some evidence that people infected with Delta have a lot more virus in their body — as much as a thousand fold higher, and that may also be true for breakthrough infections. If that's the case, vaccinated people may be transmitting the virus to others (unvaccinated and vaccinated) at a significant enough rate that they should be wearing masks.”

Breakthrough infections are frightening, but vaccinated people account for only approximately 3% of COVID hospitalizations. More than 97% of the hospitalizations are in unvaccinated individuals.

Additionally, from WMUR 7/22/21-We all know that breakthrough cases can happen, but the vaccines have been touted as being highly effective at preventing hospitalizations and deaths, so do the numbers bear that out?

In a word, yes. We can take a look at the number of people who have died of COVID-19 in New Hampshire since people were able to get fully vaccinated, starting in January. Depending on when you start counting, there have been about 600 COVID-19 deaths in New Hampshire since then. Of those, five were people who were fully vaccinated. That's compelling evidence that the vaccines prevent deaths from COVID-19.

5) Other miscellaneous information:

A) There is substantial consideration of suggesting booster shots for people with suppressed immune systems who have already been vaccinated. That includes organ transplant patients, cancer patients, and others who are on immunosuppressive medications. Please contact your PCP for further details.

B) A growing number of places and groups are considering vaccine or mask mandates (medical clinics/facilities, businesses, for city workers...) as Covid-19 cases continue to rise. Is it legal for places to impose such requirements? This is out of my purview and likely debatable.



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However, Justice Department lawyers have determined federal law doesn't prohibit public agencies and private businesses from requiring Covid-19 vaccines.

C) A White House official said yesterday that the United States will be keeping foreign travel restrictions in place as the Delta variant continues to spread. The country is also monitoring the spread of the variant in the United Kingdom for potential economic damage.

Yours in Health,

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