



What's on the Horizon for Public Health

COVID 19 a Shadow of Its Former Self....for now

COVID disease is receding into the shadows because you chose to get vaccinated.

Every person who chooses vaccination contributes to the success of bringing the pandemic under control. Our low case rates can be attributed to the fact that MN now has a 70% or higher vaccination rate. But before we get too comfortable, we need to remember COVID is still out there. It is lurking in the shadows. While it's good to be back doing the things we love, we need to stay alert. Viruses mutate, sometimes quickly.

For instance, the delta variant is a naturally occurring mutation of the COVID-19 virus. Data show that the delta variant is more contagious and spreads more easily than the original COVID-19 virus. It accounts for a growing proportion of new coronavirus cases across the U.S., and people infected with the delta variant are more likely to need hospitalization than those infected with earlier strains of the virus. Data also show that the COVID-19 vaccines are extremely effective in protecting fully vaccinated people from catching and spreading the virus, including the delta variant. But it is critical that you are fully vaccinated to be protected. To be fully vaccinated you need to be 14 days past your last dose of vaccine.

It only makes sense that when more people are vaccinated it results in less transmission because there are fewer people for the virus to infect. If you are not vaccinated, please consider doing so. Ask questions and educate yourself using trustworthy and credible sources.

COVID vaccine is readily available by contacting your pharmacy, clinic or local public health agency. The vaccines are safe, effective, free and available for those 12 years of age and older. While there may be mild side effects, the benefits of receiving the vaccine significantly outweigh the risks of serious complications and death from COVID-19 disease.

COVID vaccine can now be given at the same time as other vaccines. Before entering the 7th grade, children need tetanus and meningitis vaccines. Take the opportunity to protect them against COVID too. An important reason for children to get the COVID-19 vaccine is to protect their friends, family, and the broader community. Being vaccinated will allow them to safely get back to the things they have missed: in-person school, playing with friends, and participating in sports activities.

We all need to be diligent and responsible as we collectively fight to keep COVID in the shadows. We need to monitor ourselves for symptoms, wash our hands often and continue to clean the surfaces we touch. Most importantly, more and more people need to get vaccinated. Visit www.health.state.mn.us or www.cdc.gov or www.horizonpublichealth.org

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