



Public Health Advisory Update COVID-19

2022-1

Updated March 4, 2022

The decline of the omicron wave has spurred new COVID-19 guidance at the federal, state and local levels. This Public Health Advisory (PHA) reports a similar decline within Pima County, and the transition from pandemic to endemic phase within Pima County. This PHA includes the latest recommendations to continue to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 as Pima County begins the process of recovery.

Pima County COVID facts

- There have been over 249,000 COVID-19 cases diagnosed and more than 3,600 deaths attributed to COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic.
- Pima County, which had been in a state of high transmission since August 2021, moved into substantial transmission, with 92 cases/100K as of March 2, 2022.
- Hospital and ICU bed availability has increased over the past two weeks as the cases have decreased.
- This school year, schools have reported over 23,000 cases, over 420 outbreaks and over 195 classroom closures due to COVID.
- As of March 2, 2022, 71.4% of the population of Pima County had been fully vaccinated. Among those 65 and older, 93.3 were fully vaccinated.
- Across all age groups, unvaccinated individuals had a greater risk of testing positive for COVID-19, a greater risk of hospitalization from COVID-19, and a greater risk of dying from COVID-19 than people who were fully vaccinated. See ADHS report, updated Feb. 16, 2022, here:
<https://www.azdhs.gov/covid19/documents/data/rates-of-cov-19-by-vaccination.pdf?v=20220105>

New COVID-19 Impact Metrics

- The CDC recently released a new COVID-19 Community Level metric that will be updated weekly:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>
- New CDC guidance is based on three metrics that together are used to determine COVID-19 community risk level (now classified as High, Medium or Low). These metrics are:
 - New COVID-19 cases per 100K people in the past seven days (with cases being classified as fewer or greater than 200/100K in last seven days)
 - New COVID-19 admissions per 100K total (7-day total)
 - Percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7-day average)
- In consideration of the new CDC guidance, the Health Department will be updating its progress report at <https://webcms.pima.gov/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=568644>

COVID-19 Mitigation Measures for all Community Members

- The Health Department **strongly recommends** the following mitigation measures be observed by all residents and visitors in Pima County:
 - Get vaccinated, and if already vaccinated get boosted.
 - Stay home when sick with a fever, cough, or other COVID-19 symptoms
 - Every person who is symptomatic or has had an exposure should test promptly for COVID-19.
 - Wear a mask that provides you with the best protection if you are symptomatic, at least 65 years old, or if you are a household contact of someone who is at-risk
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or fabric, or into your sleeve or elbow (not into hands)
 - Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer

Immunocompromised or High-Risk Individuals

- Have a plan for rapid testing if needed (e.g. have home tests available)
- Wear a mask that provides you with the best protection in high-risk situations
- Talk with your provider to determine if you are a candidate for treatments like oral antivirals, monoclonal antibodies or preventive treatments.

Face coverings

- Masks may be appropriate in public indoor spaces, regardless of vaccination status, depending upon your personal risks.
- Masks continue to be required while in [public transportation hubs and on public transportation](#), including buses, airplanes, trains and ride-shares.

Vaccination

- PCHD **strongly recommends** that anyone 5 years or older receive the primary COVID-19 vaccination series, and booster if age-eligible. Boosters are available to anyone over 12 if it has been five months from their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two months since their single shot of Johnson & Johnson. Further information on vaccine availability is at www.pima.gov/covid19vaccine.

School and Childcare Settings

- School districts are responsible for determining COVID mitigation policy for their schools.
- The CDC no longer recommends universal indoor mask wearing in K-12 schools and early education settings in areas with low or medium COVID-19 community level.
- Schools should continue to report confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 within 48 hours.

Therapeutics

- COVID-19 treatment, including combination monoclonal antibody (mAB) therapies, are available in Pima County. Information is available at www.pima.gov/covid19treatment.
- Individuals at high risk or with certain medical conditions should consider mAB if they receive a positive COVID test or meet criteria for preventive treatment. The CDC lists risk factors on this page: <https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/therapies/anti-sars-cov-2-antibody-products/anti-sars-cov-2-mono-clonal-antibodies/>

County Response Priorities for 2022

Pima County supports a strong community recovery and is committed to:

- Continuing to ensure COVID-19 testing and vaccine availability at no cost throughout the community.
- Advancing health equity and access to services for our diverse community.
- Supporting individuals and families impacted by COVID-19.

The Pima County Health Department helps to guide the COVID-19 response and recommend appropriate layered mitigation that should help minimize COVID-19 transmission and save lives. We recognize the ongoing strain associated with the COVID-19 pandemic on individual lives as well as our educational institutions, businesses and community. The Health Department is grateful for the on-going cooperation and commitment to wellness of all our residents.