



Public Health Advisory Update COVID-19 2021-10

Updated July 29, 2021

This is a rapidly evolving situation. The public health advisory will be updated when critical new information and recommendations are needed.

The Pima County Health Department (PCHD) is committed to ensuring that our community is able to safely resume the variety of activities previously experienced before the pandemic. This update to the July 1, 2021, Public Health Advisory (PHA) provides a status update of the pandemic in Pima County, including the latest on vaccination efforts, disease situation, and ongoing recommendations to reduce the impact of COVID-19. The Department will continue to provide Public Health Advisory Updates that are informed by an analysis of increasing data and knowledge about COVID-19.

What We Know

COVID-19 is highly contagious and spreads primarily through person-to-person contact. Significant community and individual adherence to mitigation recommendations as well as high vaccination rates have been demonstrated to decrease illness and death. Genetic variants are increasingly common across the U.S. The delta variant is more transmissible than other variants and may be associated with serious complications, hospitalization and even death. Since May, PCHD has submitted approximately 15 percent of positive PCR tests to the state for sequencing. In Pima County at this time, the alpha variant has been sequenced from 359 cases and the delta variant from 41 cases. Statewide, 75% of PCR COVID-19 test results sequenced are the delta variant.

Pima County is considered to be in a state of substantial transmission, with over 63 cases/100K in the week ending July 24. There have been 119,681 COVID-19 cases diagnosed in Pima County as of July 26, 2021. More than 2,459 deaths have been attributed to COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, an increase of 32 deaths since July 1. **More than one out of every 426 residents** of Pima County has died due to COVID-19. We are experiencing decreased availability of hospital beds over the last three weeks.

There is a recent increase in cases in K-12 schools. Schools have reported at least 56 cases since July 20, including eight outbreaks. These cases account for approximately 8% of our total reported cases, compared to 4% of total cases during the last school year. In addition, there are increasing pediatric admissions and ER visits reported in the last two weeks.

Clinical COVID-19 testing continues to be available at no cost in the county at [Pima County COVID-19 Testing Centers](#).

COVID-19 Response Updates

Vaccination

- As of July 27, 2021, nearly 627,000 residents of Pima County had received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccines at numerous locations throughout the state. This is an increase of 29,742 vaccinations since June 30; nearly 63% of the population 18 or older is fully vaccinated. More than 83.9% of people 65 and over have been fully vaccinated.
- The Pima County Vaccine Data Dashboard with further information about vaccination rates in Pima County is available at <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>
- Anyone 12 years or older can receive the Pfizer-Biotech COVID-19 vaccine in Pima County. Pima County Health Clinics have COVID-19 vaccines available at no cost. Further information on vaccine availability is at www.pima.gov/covid19vaccine
- In general, people are considered fully vaccinated:
 - 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines
 - 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine
 - If you don't meet these requirements, regardless of your age, you are NOT fully vaccinated and should continue to wear a mask and take other precautions
- At this time, over 95% of people diagnosed with COVID-19 are unvaccinated.
- Breakthrough cases – infections that occur after an individual has been fully vaccinated – account for 0.1 percent of cases.

Therapeutics

- Combination monoclonal antibody therapies remain available in Pima County under Emergency Use Authorization. Information is available www.pima.gov/covid19mab and <https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/statement-on-bamlanivimab-plus-etesevimab-eua/>.

COVID-19 Mitigation Measures

- **Face Coverings**
 - PCHD **strongly recommends** that all Pima County residents 5 and older (including fully vaccinated individuals) wear masks in public indoor settings if six feet of physical distancing can't be maintained. This does not apply to K-12 schools. See below for K-12 Schools mask guidance.
 - Fully vaccinated as well as unvaccinated residents and employees of correctional facilities, homeless shelters, congregate living facilities and health care facilities or people on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in transportation hubs such as airports, bus, train or other transit stations should continue to wear a mask.
 - Fully vaccinated as well as unvaccinated individuals who are immune compromised, including those undergoing transplant or cancer treatment, should seek the guidance of their clinical care team before discontinuing mask use.
 - People who are vaccinated and develop symptoms of COVID-19 should get tested for COVID-19.
 - Regardless of vaccination status, correct use of well-fitted face coverings **may be required** by businesses, health care facilities, public transportation or other entities that serve the public.

Maintenance of Public Health Mitigation Measures

- PCHD recommends the following mitigation measures be continued by all:
 - Stay home when sick with a fever, cough, or other COVID-19 symptoms
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or fabric or, if not possible, into their sleeve or elbow (but not into hands)
 - Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer
 - Avoid poorly ventilated and crowded spaces.

Reporting

- Reporting of confirmed and suspected cases of COVID-19 to the **Pima County Health Department** continues to be required for schools, businesses, and government entities if individuals test positive for COVID-19 and were present in the workplace or school within the 48 hours prior to onset of symptoms or testing.
- Entities should instruct employees, staff or students to adhere to isolation and quarantine protocols specified by the County and exclude positive cases and close contacts from the school or workplace during the isolation or quarantine periods.

School and Childcare Settings

- PCHD **strongly recommends** that all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools wear masks indoors at all times during school regardless of vaccination status.
- Teachers, school administrators, and staff should continue to follow CDC's school guidance.
- The school dashboard indicates that Pima County is considered to have substantial transmission as of this date; data is available at <https://www.azdhs.gov/covid19/index.php#schools-dashboard>
- The Health Department continues to support schools and districts in implementing strong layered mitigation strategies as a part of their return to learning.

County Response Priorities for 2021

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.
- Enhancing public health infrastructure.
- Increasing engagement with Pima County residents.
- 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. PCHD recognizes the ongoing strain associated with the COVID-19 pandemic on individual lives as well as our educational institutions, businesses and community. PCHD remains grateful for the County residents' cooperation and commitment to wellness.