



Public Health Advisory Update COVID-19

2021-13

Updated December 22, 2021

This Public Health Advisory (PHA) provides an update of the pandemic in Pima County, including the latest on masking, vaccination efforts, disease situation, and ongoing recommendations to reduce the impact of COVID-19.

Face coverings

- On December 21, 2021, the Pima County Board of Supervisors passed [Resolution 2021-87](#) that **requires all Pima County residents 5 and older (including fully vaccinated individuals) to wear masks in public indoor settings when it's not possible to maintain six feet of physical distancing.** Exemptions are listed in the Resolution.
- Masks are also required while in [public transportation hubs and on public transportation](#), including buses, airplanes, trains and ride-shares.

COVID-19 Mitigation Measures

- The Health Department **strongly recommends** the following mitigation measures be observed by all residents and visitors in Pima County:
 - Get vaccinated and boosted if you have not yet done so.
 - Stay home when sick with a fever, cough, or other COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Avoid indoor and crowded spaces.
 - 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.

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 16 if it has been six 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

- K-12 schools and childcare settings are indoor public spaces, and as such masks are required for teachers, staff, students, and visitors.
- The school dashboard indicates that Pima County continues to have high transmission of COVID-19. School data is available at <https://www.azdhs.gov/covid19/index.php#schools-dashboard>.

Testing

- Any person, regardless of vaccination status, who has COVID-19 symptoms should test for COVID-19.
- Close contacts to confirmed or suspected COVID should test for COVID-19 on day 5-7 after contact and regardless of vaccination status.
- PCHD continues to distribute at-home self-test kits at Pima County libraries as well as PCHD clinics and other distribution points. Please see www.pima.gov/covid19testing for further details.

Other Strategies for the Holidays

- Please take the following personal actions to help limit transmission of COVID-19:
 - Celebrate outdoors.

- If gathering with a group of people from multiple households and potentially from different parts of the country, consider taking additional precautions (e.g., avoiding crowded indoor spaces before travel, wearing a mask indoors, testing in advance of gathering) to further reduce risk.
- Travel safely by considering testing before and after your trip.

Therapeutics

- Combination monoclonal antibody (mAB) therapies currently have limited availability in Pima County. Information is available at www.pima.gov/covid19mab and <https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/statement-on-bamlanivimab-plus-etesevimab-eua/>.
- Individuals at high risk or with certain medical conditions should consider mAB if they receive a positive COVID test. The CDC lists risk factors on [this page](#).

Reporting

- Schools typically report confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 that are present in those settings within 48 hours.

Pima County COVID facts

- There have been more than 168,000 COVID-19 cases diagnosed and nearly 3,100 deaths attributed to COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic.
- Pima County has been in a state of high transmission since August 2021, and we are continuing to experience additional acceleration of cases with 228 cases/100K as of December 21, 2021.
- In the last week multiple cases of the omicron variant have been detected in this community.
- Hospital and ICU bed availability have been constrained for the past two months.
- During this school year, schools have reported over 8,300 cases, 239 outbreaks and 131 classroom closures due to COVID.
- Community and individual adherence to masking recommendations, avoidance of indoor public spaces, and vaccination, have been demonstrated to decrease serious illness and death due to COVID.
- As of December 21, 2021, 63.3% of the population of Pima County has been fully vaccinated. Among those 65 and older, 91.6 were fully vaccinated.
- **In October and November, approximately 76% of all COVID cases occurred among individuals who were unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated.**

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.
- Supporting individuals and families impacted by COVID-19.
- Increasing engagement with Pima County residents.

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.