



Public Health Advisory Update COVID-19

2021-12

Updated November 15, 2021

The Pima County Health Department (PCHD) is committed to ensuring that our community can safely resume the variety of activities previously experienced before the pandemic. This Public Health Advisory (PHA) provides an 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.

Pima County COVID-19 Mitigation Measures

Vaccination

- PCHD **strongly recommends** that parents/guardians consider vaccinating all age-eligible children as soon as possible.
- Anyone 5 years or older can receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Further information on vaccine availability is at www.pima.gov/covid19vaccine.
- Pima County-sponsored vaccination sites will be making boosters available to anyone over 18, six months from their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two months since their single shot of Johnson & Johnson.

School and Childcare Settings

- PCHD **strongly recommends** that all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools always wear masks indoors during school regardless of vaccination status, consistent with current CDC guidance.
- The school dashboard indicates that Pima County has high transmission as of this date; data is available at <https://www.azdhs.gov/covid19/index.php#schools-dashboard>.

Face coverings

- PCHD **strongly recommends** that all Pima County residents 5 and older (including fully vaccinated individuals) wear masks in public indoor 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.
- 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**.

Testing

- People who are symptomatic with COVID-19 symptoms should test for COVID-19.
- Close contacts to confirmed positives, regardless of vaccination status, should test for COVID-19 on day 5-7 after contact. Further information is available at www.pima.gov/covid19testing.
- At-home self-test kits are available. Please see www.pima.gov/covid19testing for further details.

Other Mitigation Strategies

- With the upcoming holidays please do the following:
 - Celebrate outdoors to help limit transmission of COVID-19.
 - Wear face masks indoors.
 - Travel safely by testing before your trip, wear a mask and wash hands regularly.

- PCHD recommends the following mitigation measures be continued by all:
 - Get vaccinated and boosted if you have not yet done so.
 - Stay home when sick with a fever, cough, or other COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or fabric or, into their sleeve or elbow (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.

Therapeutics

- Combination monoclonal antibody therapies have limited availability 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/>.

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.

What We Know

Pima County is experiencing a significant increase with cases increasing approximately 30% over the last 30 days. Pima County has been in a state of high transmission since August 2021. We are experiencing additional acceleration of cases with over 305 cases/100K as of November 11, 2021. There have been over 150,000 COVID-19 cases diagnosed in Pima County as of November 10, 2021, an increase of over 34,000 since July 1. More than 2,790 deaths have been attributed to COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. Pima County is also experiencing decreased availability of hospital beds over the last three weeks. There is continued increase in cases in K-12 schools. Schools have reported over 4,600 cases since July 20, 2021, including over 140 outbreaks. These cases account for about 15% of our reported cases, compared to 4% of total cases during the last school year. Over 90 classrooms have been closed due to COVID. Significant community and individual adherence to mitigation recommendations, as well as high vaccination rates, have been demonstrated to decrease serious illness and death.

Vaccination

- As of November 12, 2021, nearly 69.5% of the population 12 or older is fully vaccinated. More than 89.2% of people 65 and over are fully vaccinated.
- **In October, approximately 76% of all COVID cases occurred among individuals who were unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated.**
- Since the beginning of the pandemic, only 198 fully vaccinated people required hospitalization.

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.