

## COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions Updated October 19, 2021

### JCPH PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS

#### 1. What public health orders are in effect in Jefferson County?

Currently, there are three public health orders in effect in Jefferson County. To access current and past Orders from JCPH, visit our Local Public Health Orders webpage at [www.jeffco.us/4114/Local-Public-Health-Orders](http://www.jeffco.us/4114/Local-Public-Health-Orders). For statewide orders, [click here](#).

- PHO 21-002 – Please see below for questions related to PHO 21-002.
- PHOs 21-004 and 21-005 – [Please see this FAQ resource](#) for questions related to these orders.

#### PHO 21-002

#### 2. What does the First Amended Public Health Order 21-002 require and why was it put in place?

Jefferson County Public Health (JCPH) issued this Order to ensure safety and continued in-person learning in Pre-K-12 schools and childcares. The Order, which was amended on August 28, 2021, requires all individuals ages 3+ to wear a mask when indoors at school and childcare settings in Jefferson County, regardless of vaccination status. Additionally, the Order requires all unvaccinated faculty and staff, as well as all unvaccinated students and adults who are participating in school-based/school-sponsored extracurricular activities, to undergo routine testing during the academic year. For complete requirements for schools and childcares, [view the full amended Order](#).

#### 3. What changed since the original version of the Order and the Second Amended PHO 21-002?

While the Order originally required masking for everyone ages 2+ in schools and childcares, it was amended to require masking for everyone ages 3+ following feedback and discussion with childcare owners and operators in Jeffco. Additionally, the amended Order no longer requires social distancing of at least 6 ft. when masks are removed during meal times or when playing instruments indoors, and instead, JCPH strongly recommends maintaining at least 3 ft. distance in these instances. (Many smaller childcare facilities expressed spacing constraints and could not physically comply with 6 ft. spacing requirements during meal times). JCPH hopes these minor adjustments will help ensure schools and childcares are able to fully and successfully implement mitigation requirements.

#### 4. Where does PHO 21-002 apply?

The Order applies to all Pre-K-12 schools and licensed childcares in Jefferson County, including public, private and charter schools. “School setting” means any indoor facility used for instruction of academic or school-based or sponsored extracurricular activities for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. School setting includes public, private and charter schools. School setting includes all buildings on school property where individuals may be present, as well as any place in Jefferson County where school-based or sponsored activities are performed, even if such activities are not performed on school property.

**5. Who does PHO 21-002 apply to?**

This Order applies to anyone entering a Pre-K-12 school or childcare in Jefferson County. This includes but is not limited to all students, faculty, staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors, spectators at indoor extracurricular activities, officials at indoor extracurricular activities and any others entering a school or childcare facility.

**6. Does PHO 21-002 apply to private schools?**

Yes, the Order applies to all Pre-K-12 schools and licensed childcares in Jefferson County, including public, private and charter schools.

**7. Does PHO 21-002 apply to institutions of higher education?**

No. However, Order 21-002 does apply to licensed childcares or Pre-K-12 schools run by an institution of higher education.

**8. Does PHO 21-002 require masking outdoors?**

No. The Order only requires masking indoors.

**9. How long will PHO 21-002 last? What data is informing this decision?**

The Order will remain in effect until modified, amended or rescinded. Jefferson County Public Health will review data on at least a monthly basis to determine the continuing necessity of the Order and the need for any modifications.

Please note in addition to universal masking regardless of vaccination status in all schools, the [CDC recommends](#) weekly testing for unvaccinated students, teachers and staff for schools in communities that have moderate, high or substantial transmission, defined as 10 or more new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days, and recommends the cancelation of in-person high-risk sports and extracurricular activities (unless all participants are fully vaccinated) when community transmission is high, defined as 100 or more cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days. The CDC publishes county-level community transmission metrics here: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

## 10. What is required under PHO 21-002, and what is recommended for schools and childcare settings?

Summary of **Requirements** for Schools and Childcares in Jeffco:

- Masks for all individuals age 3+ indoors in all schools, childcares and school-based and school-sponsored extracurricular activities
- By September 7, implement a COVID-19 testing policy requiring all unvaccinated faculty and staff to be tested weekly throughout the school year
- By September 7, implement a COVID-19 testing policy requiring all unvaccinated students and adults participating in school-based and school-sponsored extracurricular activities to be tested weekly
- Post signage that masks are required at their facilities ([signage provided in English and Spanish in the Order](#))
- Enforcement of quarantine for individuals who are unvaccinated and unmasked when exposed to an individual case, and enforcement of quarantine for all unvaccinated individuals — masked and unmasked — who are exposed in outbreaks
- Enforcement of isolation for anyone who tests positive for COVID-19
- Cooperation in case investigations and contact tracing, including reporting cases and outbreaks to JCPH
- Cooperation in outbreak investigations, including producing testing and vaccination logs

Summary of **Recommendations** for Schools and Childcares in Jeffco:

- Promoting [vaccinations](#) to increase coverage among eligible students, faculty and staff
- Require [vaccinations](#) for faculty and staff, as well as all adults and eligible students participating in school-based sports and extracurricular activities
- Maintaining social distancing of at least 3 ft. when masks are removed during meal times or when playing instruments indoors
- JCPH also continues to strongly encourage schools and childcares to following other elements in [JCPH's Guidance for Schools and Childcares](#).
- Follow additional recommendations outlined in the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's [Back to School Roadmap](#) to layer as many additional precautionary measures as feasible to keep their students, faculty and staff safe

For complete requirements for schools and childcares, [view the full amended Order](#).

**11. How does PHO 21-002 help ensure my child can remain in-person for learning?**

[Masks are safe and well known to reduce the transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19.](#) By having universal masking and other mitigation strategies in place, routine classroom exposure quarantines can be avoided. However, anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will be required to isolate and quarantines will be required for unvaccinated individuals exposed while unmasked in outbreaks.

**12. Does masking harm mental health?**

No. While we know that wearing a mask isn't always comfortable, there is no persuasive evidence that masks affect the mental health of children and teens. [Read more information about masks and mental health from CDPHE.](#)

Children's Hospital Colorado also recently released this strong position on masking and mental health: "Masks are not harmful to children's mental health. There is no scientific evidence to support this claim ... Getting back to school safely – in masks – will benefit children's mental health after more than a year of uncertainty and strain." To see more from Children's Hospital Colorado, including this statement, please refer to their [Q&A: Back to School in Year Two of the COVID Pandemic webpage](#). Additionally, check out their webpage, "[Masks for Kids: What You Need to Know About Face Coverings](#)." (Note: If these links do not open right away when you click them, try right clicking and copy/pasting the links directly in your web browser).

**13. If my child is properly masked and exposed to an individual with COVID-19, will they be required to quarantine?**

No. However, if they are unvaccinated, they will be required to quarantine if they are identified as part of an outbreak.

**14. If vaccinated individuals can also spread COVID-19, why are we not testing them in the interest of containing the spread?**

Testing is required for unvaccinated faculty and staff because people who are not vaccinated remain at high risk for COVID-19, and the greatest risk of transmission is among unvaccinated people who are much more likely to contract, and therefore transmit, the virus to others. While there are some breakthrough cases as no vaccine is perfect, the large majority of cases and hospitalizations are among people who are not vaccinated or are only partially vaccinated.

For specific risk rates, please refer to this resource from CDPHE that provides current data demonstrating how less likely it is for a vaccinated individual to get COVID-19, be hospitalized with confirmed COVID-19 and die from COVID-19: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine-breakthrough>.

**15. If a student has already tested positive for COVID-19 in the past, are they still required to get tested if unvaccinated? If yes, why is natural immunity not being considered under this mandate?**

JCPH is in alignment with CDPHE and CDC guidance with this requirement.

Unvaccinated persons whom have had recent, laboratory-confirmed infections of COVID-19 via PCR or antigen testing within the previous 90 days do not need to participate in the weekly testing requirements for the duration of 90 days past test collection. Once 90 days has passed, they are required to resume testing if they have not been vaccinated yet. Natural immunity from infection likely provides some degree of immunity for around three months, but those whom were previously ill appear to become vulnerable to reinfection at that point. Additionally, natural immunity varies more widely from individual to individual than immunity from vaccination. Thus, because the strength and length of natural immunity is not yet fully understood, individuals are required to test if they are unvaccinated staff or unvaccinated students participating in an extracurricular activity.

**16. What happens to students with prior COVID-19 infections if they still test positive, which is possible for weeks/months after infection?**

JCPH is in alignment with CDPHE and CDC guidance with this requirement. It is not recommended to continue testing after a recent infection of COVID-19 for up to 90 days after illness because while they may test positive on a PCR test, it is highly unlikely for most people to continue being contagious past the ~10 days from symptom onset or test collection. Testing during this time frame that yields a positive result is more likely to be evidence of a previous recent infection than a new one. After 90 days however, natural immunity is likely to have waned, and reinfection is a possibility. Thus testing is required again at that point for unvaccinated students participating in extracurricular activities until the person has been vaccinated.

**17. Do weekly testing requirements for unvaccinated students participating in extracurriculars apply only to high school levels or to also middle and elementary?**

The PHO requirements apply to ALL school settings, pre-K through 12th grade. Per the PHO, School Setting means any indoor facility used for instruction of academic or school-based or sponsored extracurricular activities for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. "School Setting" includes public, private and charter schools. "School Setting" includes all buildings on school property where individuals aged 3-19 may be present for any reason, as well as any place in Jefferson County where school based or sponsored activities are performed, even if such activities are not performed on school property. Additionally, per the PHO, School Settings must implement a monitoring system which requires all unvaccinated students and adults participating in school-based extracurricular activities, other than spectators at extracurricular competitions or performances, to be tested at least weekly throughout the 2021-2022 school year and to present negative test results each week to



continue participation in the extracurricular activity. The monitoring system must be implemented no later than September 7, 2021.

**18. Are schools and childcare settings required to have 6 ft. spacing for indoor eating? Or is it just that we are to take into account the lack of distance when doing contact identification for quarantine decisions?**

Per the JCPH PHO, if a school or childcare center is unable to maintain the 6 ft. spacing while eating, a minimum 3 ft. distancing is allowed. However, the JCPH team will take that metric into account when conducting an investigation. It is not required to have the 6 ft. spacing, but it is a best practice and strongly recommended.

**19. Are schools and childcare settings allowed to accept self-reported UNPROCTORED home tests for:**

- **Test-based strategy for shortened quarantine option,**
- **Testing someone with no known exposure AND experiencing symptoms (Return To Learn guidance), and/or**
- **Compliance with weekly testing requirement for unvaccinated staff/faculty OR unvaccinated students who are participating in extracurricular activities?**

No to each of these scenarios.

- Schools and childcare settings should accept reports of self-reported UNPROCTORED home tests for POSITIVE results. Per CDPHE, schools and childcare settings are required to act on all reported positive tests. Schools and childcare settings should report these cases to JCPH, require exclusion for duration of isolation period, and quarantine close contacts as appropriate for these individuals.
- Schools and childcare settings are only to accept documented, health care worker administered/proctored tests, or tests from a community testing site, when a NEGATIVE antigen result is required for either test based strategy for shortened quarantine option, or compliance with the weekly testing requirement for unvaccinated staff/faculty OR unvaccinated students who are participating in extracurricular activities. Return To Learn guidance (for when someone is symptomatic but no known exposure) stipulates use of PCR or molecular testing to return to school when testing is indicated.

**20. I get a positive result from a rapid antigen test, and then a follow up PCR or rapid antigen shows negative, what are my results?**

For purposes of public health case status determination, the CDPHE case and outbreak definitions document [linked here](#) defines a probable case inclusive of anyone who has a positive rapid antigen test performed by a CLIA-certified provider, which includes any health care provider or community testing site administered test. This is regardless of subsequent testing results. Discordant test results do not necessarily mean that the first one was a false positive.

All K-12 settings in Jefferson County are required to act upon all reported positive tests, regardless of subsequent test results, and that required action is a school exclusion for a period of 10 days from onset of symptoms or test collection date if there were no symptoms and quarantine of close contacts.

There is not any reason for someone to seek confirmatory testing for a positive result, whether that initial positive result was an at-home, over-the-counter rapid antigen, an antigen test done by a health care provider or a PCR. The school is still required to exclude the student for isolation/exclude close contacts for quarantine as applicable regardless of subsequent results.

Sometimes it is appropriate for a NEGATIVE test result to be confirmed with a PCR test. For example, if a person has no known exposure but develops symptoms that persist >48 hours, the CDPHE Return to Learn guidance advises that a negative antigen is insufficient, and it must be verified with a negative PCR before permitting the ill person to return. The other instance is when someone has a known exposure and symptoms, and subsequently tests negative on an antigen test, which would also need to be verified with a PCR test before allowing them to return to school on day 15 post exposure vs. requiring them to start an isolation period of 10 days from symptom onset. This is because the antigen test may be more likely to have a false negative result in these scenarios, and it is too risky to allow a possible false negative result to contribute to spread of illness in the school environment.

Schools in Jefferson County are legally required to exclude someone who has a positive test for a period of 10 days from symptom onset if symptomatic/date of test collection if asymptomatic, and ill persons cannot test out of isolation for an earlier return to school. Additionally, close contacts of those whom have tested positive will need to be excluded for quarantine if they are not vaccinated nor recently lab-verified COVID-19 positive test results of their own for presumed temporary natural immunity.

**21. Does the weekly testing requirement also apply to third parties who are not affiliated with the school/childcare but use the facility space after hours?**

If this is not a school sponsored event, then the PHO does not apply to a third party simply renting out the space.

**22. Are there any exemptions or exceptions to PHO 21-002?**

The following individuals are exempt from mask/face covering requirements of this Order:

- Individuals under age 3
- Individuals who cannot medically tolerate a face covering and who have submitted to the School or Childcare Setting a statement provided on an appropriate health care professional's letterhead including the following:

- Clinicians printed name, license number, address, phone number
- Signature of the medical provider
- Identification of the medical condition preventing the individual from wearing a mask and any recommended alternative to the mask
- Individuals who require special educational service needs that cannot be conducted while wearing a mask/face covering (i.e., those with a 504 or an IEP).

Additionally, individuals performing any of the following activities are exempt from the mask/face covering requirements of this Order while the activity is being performed:

- Individuals who are hearing impaired or otherwise disabled or who are communicating with someone who is hearing impaired or otherwise disabled and where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication.
- Individuals seated during meal and snack time and who are actively eating or drinking. However, it is strongly recommended that individuals be seated at least three (3) feet apart during meal and snack time or these activities must occur outdoors.
- Individuals who are asked to temporarily remove their mask for identification purposes in furtherance of a particular service requiring legal identification.
- Individuals who are actively engaged in a public safety role, such as law enforcement personnel, firefighters or emergency medical personnel.
- Individuals who are receiving a medical service where the temporary removal of a mask is necessary to perform the service.
- Individuals who are in a swimming pool and actively engaged in a pool activity in which their mask might become wet.
- When a student in a school setting for academic credit is actively playing an instrument that cannot otherwise be played while wearing a mask and such student is at least three (3) feet from all other individuals in the room.
- Individuals who are actively napping or resting pursuant to state licensing requirements.
- Individuals who are alone in an enclosed room.
- Individuals who are officiating or participating in a religious service or practice where the temporary removal of a mask is necessary to complete or participate in the religious service or practice.

**23. Is there a religious exemption for face coverings under PHO 21-002?**

Masks may temporarily be removed while an individual is participating in a religious practice or rite to the extent removal of a mask is necessary to engage in that religious practice or rite. However, no broader general exemption from wearing a mask or face covering for religious or personal beliefs is authorized.



**24. Where can I get a mask/face covering?**

You can make or buy your own. Many retail stores sell masks. CDC has a [video about making your own mask](#).

**25. How do schools implement routine testing as outlined in PHO 21-002?**

Schools and childcares have until September 7, 2021 to implement the testing requirements in the Order. Each school can operationalize routine testing as they feel best meets their needs. Schools are encouraged to take advantage of [CDPHE's Free COVID-19 Testing Program for Colorado Schools](#).

**26. How do schools record testing results?**

Schools and childcares have until September 7, 2021 to implement the testing requirements in the Order. Each school can operationalize testing record keeping as they feel best meets their needs, as long as they can produce records upon request from JCPH during outbreak investigations.

**27. What authority does JCPH have to issue PHO 21-002 or other Public Health Orders?**

JCPH has public health jurisdiction over Jefferson County, Colorado, including all cities and towns therein. In furtherance of its jurisdiction, JCPH has the power and duty to investigate and control the causes of epidemic or communicable diseases and conditions affecting the public health within Jefferson County, as well as the power and duty to close schools and public places and to prohibit gatherings of people when necessary to protect public health, and to establish, maintain and enforce isolation and quarantine, and in pursuance thereof, to exercise physical control over property and over persons within Jefferson County as JCPH may find necessary for the protection of public health.

**28. How is this Order enforced?**

We fully expect all schools and childcares to comply with the Order to protect health and in-person learning. However, any school or licensed childcare facility that is in violation of this Order may be subject to a civil action, reporting to the appropriate licensing agency for suspension or revocation of its license, or an immediate closure order issued by JCPH.

## COVID-19 VACCINES

### 29. Where can I get a vaccine?

There are many FREE vaccination locations across Jefferson County, available at [www.jeffco.us/vaccinesignup](http://www.jeffco.us/vaccinesignup). Additionally, there are hundreds of vaccine providers throughout the state where you can get a FREE COVID-19 vaccine, no appointment needed. For a list of statewide locations, use the state's [vaccine finder](#).

### 30. Why should I get a COVID-19 vaccine?

Widespread vaccination is how we are going to end this pandemic and keep it behind us. Getting a vaccine will help protect yourself and your loved ones. Once you've been vaccinated, you have the upper hand against the virus, because it means that even if you are exposed, you have a very low risk of getting COVID-19. In the rare instance that you do still contract the virus, it won't be as severe.

If you have friends or loved ones who are eligible but not yet vaccinated, try talking to them about the importance of getting vaccinated and share why you made the decision to protect yourself and those you care about by getting vaccinated. Ask how you can help, whether that is sharing reliable vaccine information or helping them find and get to a COVID-19 vaccination location. People trust those they know and love, and your conversation might make all the difference.

At this point in the pandemic, we need to band together as a community. We all have a role to play, and even though we're exhausted, it's too important to stop now. If we all do what we can — and show compassion for our friends and neighbors — we can get through this. Have the hard conversations. Talk about vaccines. Talk about prevention strategies. Talk about mental health. Talk about resilience. Jeffco is a great community and has achieved great things in the past because we have united — if we can unite again now, there's no telling how significant our impact will be.

### 31. What are current Jefferson County policies regarding vaccines?

At this time, JCPH has not issued any COVID-19 vaccine requirements for businesses or residents in Jefferson County. We continue to strongly encourage everyone ages 12+ to get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible, so we can end this pandemic and keep it behind us.

### 32. Where can I access my vaccine card/proof of vaccination?

- If you got the COVID-19 vaccine in Colorado, you can get your immunization record through the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS) [Public Portal](#). If you have difficulty finding your record, [please review this guidance document](#).

- Alternatively, if you got the COVID-19 vaccine in Colorado, you can find a digital version of your COVID-19 immunization card through [myVaccine Record on the myColorado mobile app](#).
- If you got your COVID-19 vaccination(s) outside of Colorado, please contact your vaccination provider or the immunization information system of the state in which you received your COVID-19 to request a copy of your records.

### **33. Are COVID-19 vaccines safe?**

- All authorized COVID-19 vaccines are going through the most intense safety monitoring in U.S. history.
- Millions of people in the United States have safely received a vaccine and are now protected from COVID-19.
- Tens of thousands of people volunteered to help test the vaccines in clinical trials. These clinical trials showed that the vaccines are safe and work well. The vaccines met the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and quality.
- [Learn more about vaccine safety](#).

All three COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, but for those who were waiting for full approval to be confident in their choice to get vaccinated, the [FDA recently gave full approval to Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine](#) for people ages 16 and over. The first full approval of a COVID-19 vaccine is an important milestone that should reassure anyone who has concerns about getting vaccinated.

### **34. Is it safe for children to get the vaccine?**

Yes. Children ages 12 to 17 are recommended to get the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Clinical trials showed that the Pfizer vaccine is safe and effective in this age group. Side effects for children were about the same as for adults.

While children are less likely to get seriously sick or die from COVID-19 than adults, they are still at risk and can spread the virus to others. Vaccinating tweens and teens will help keep kids safe through the end of the pandemic.

### **35. How do we know COVID-19 vaccines work/are effective?**

Science shows that vaccines are safe and very effective at preventing infections, and even more importantly at preventing the worst outcomes — severe illness, hospitalization or death — for those who do get infected.

According to the [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment \(CDPHE\)](#), people who are vaccinated are 3.3 times less likely to get COVID-19, 5.2 times less likely to be hospitalized due to COVID-19 and 3.7 times less likely to die from COVID-19. (Check this link often as this data is updated regularly based on current risk rates).

**36. Do the vaccines protect against the Delta variant?**

Yes. People who are fully vaccinated are protected from the Delta variant. Getting vaccinated also protects others around you. Current data suggests that vaccination reduces the spread of infection, leading to fewer opportunities for new variants to develop and spread.

**37. Are COVID-19 vaccines free?**

Yes, the vaccine is free. Providers should not ask you to pay for the vaccine or other administrative costs, even if you don't have health insurance. If you do have insurance, your provider may seek reimbursement from your health insurance company, but you should not be charged.

**38. Do I need to get an additional dose of vaccine if I am already vaccinated?**

A third dose or booster of COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for some individuals. Find the most current information on JCPH's "[Additional Doses & Boosters](#)" webpage.

**39. Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as other vaccines, such as the flu vaccine?**

COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines may now be given at the same time, if needed, or close together. Your doctor may consider the types of vaccine, whether you are behind on recommended vaccines, and what kind of side effects the vaccines may have before deciding whether or not to give them together. Talk to your doctor about additional concerns you might have about getting more than one vaccine at the same time.

**40. What's the difference between the three available vaccines?**

- All three vaccines work very well to prevent you from getting very sick from COVID-19. The more people are vaccinated, the closer we can get to the end of the pandemic.
- All authorized COVID-19 vaccines teach your body how to make spike proteins like the ones that cover the COVID-19 virus. Your body learns how to fight the spike protein without having to fight off the full virus. If you are exposed to a person with COVID-19 after vaccination, your body will recognize the spike proteins and remember how to fight them before the virus makes you sick.
- While all COVID-19 vaccines contain instructions for how to make spike proteins, these instructions are written in different ways. Viral vector vaccines, like the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine, use a piece of double-stranded DNA to teach your body how to fight COVID-19. mRNA vaccines, like the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, use single-stranded mRNA. The goal of every vaccine is the same – they just use a different strategy to achieve that goal.

- Janssen’s (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine is more durable than either of the authorized mRNA vaccines. It can be stored for up to three months at normal refrigeration temperatures (36–46°F or 2–8°C).
- The Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine only requires one dose. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses.

#### **41. What are the potential side effects of COVID-19 vaccines?**

You may experience mild to moderate side effects after receiving the vaccine. Side effects typically go away on their own after a few days. The most commonly reported side effects are:

- Pain, swelling, and redness at the injection site
- Pain, tenderness and swelling of the lymph nodes in the same arm of the injection
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Joint pain
- Nausea/vomiting
- Fever

The process of building immunity can cause symptoms. These symptoms are normal and show that your body’s immune system is responding to a vaccine. Other routine vaccines, like the flu vaccine, have similar side effects.

If you experience discomfort after the first dose of the vaccine, it is very important that you still receive the second dose a few weeks later for full protection.

The side effects after the second dose might be more intense or cause more discomfort than side effects after the first dose. In some cases, the side effects may be bad enough to interfere with your work and other normal daily activities for a day or two. Because the body has already responded to one dose of the vaccine, the second dose may cause a stronger immune response in your body. These side effects are expected and show that your body is continuing to build immunity.

If you are experiencing more intense side effects, stay well hydrated, rest and consider over-the-counter medications like acetaminophen or ibuprofen (if they are normally safe for you to take). Side effects are proof that your body is building immunity in response to the vaccine and will typically go away on their own within a day or two.

For in-depth information about the side effects of the vaccines, see the CDC’s [report on the Pfizer vaccine](#), [Moderna vaccine](#) and [Johnson & Johnson vaccine](#).



#### **42. Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?**

No. The vaccines don't contain the COVID-19 virus, and it is not possible to get COVID-19 from a vaccine. You may feel some side effects like fever, chills and fatigue. The current COVID-19 vaccines use temporary pieces of genetic code from the virus to stimulate your body's immune response. This cannot cause COVID-19. The goal of each vaccine is to provide your body with the tools it needs to fight the COVID-19 virus if you were to get infected. Learn more about [vaccine side effects](#) and [immunity](#).

#### **43. Can I get a COVID-19 vaccine if I want to have a baby someday?**

- Yes. If you are trying to become pregnant now or want to get pregnant in the future, you may get a COVID-19 vaccine.
- There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 vaccination causes any problems with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta. In addition, there is no evidence that fertility problems are a side effect of any vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines. People who have received COVID-19 vaccines have gone on to get pregnant and have healthy babies.
- Like all vaccines, scientists are studying COVID-19 vaccines carefully for side effects now and will continue to study them for many years.
- Please talk with your doctor for more information if you have any concerns.

#### **44. Can I get a COVID-19 vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?**

Yes. The best way to protect yourself and your baby from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated. There is now more evidence than ever about the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy. The evidence suggests that the benefits of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine outweigh any known or potential risks of vaccination during pregnancy. For more information about the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy, [visit the CDC's website](#).

#### **45. If I have recovered from COVID-19, do I still need to get vaccinated?**

Yes. We recommend that you get a vaccine even if you previously had COVID-19. Scientists are still learning more about how long you might be immune after recovering from COVID-19. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long in some people, and cases of reinfection have been reported.

If you had COVID-19, CDC says you may [wait a few months](#) after your infection before getting the vaccine. It's unlikely that you will get COVID-19 again during this time. However, you may choose to get the vaccine earlier than that as long as you have recovered from your infection.

If you received a COVID-19-specific antibody treatment (e.g. monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma) while you were sick with COVID-19, you should [wait at least 90 days](#) after receiving the antibody treatment before getting the vaccine.

**46. Can my employer require COVID-19 vaccinations or ask about vaccine status?**

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) released new guidance regarding vaccine requirements in the workplace, including whether employers can require their employees to get vaccinated, offer incentives to get vaccinated and ask about vaccination status. Please view the [guidance](#) for more information.

**47. I have a COVID-19 vaccine question that isn't listed here. Where can I go for more information?**

CDPHE has an extensive list of answers to frequently asked questions [here](#).

**COVID-19 TESTING**

**48. When should I get tested for COVID-19?**

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19, get tested as soon as possible, even if you are vaccinated. Isolate until you know your results. If you test positive, [isolate yourself](#) to prevent spreading the virus to others who may not be vaccinated.
- You should also get tested if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, about 3-5 days after you were exposed.
- Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus, and testing is the most accurate when symptoms are present. Symptoms include:
  - Fever or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fatigue
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Diarrhea

**49. I'm fully vaccinated. Do I need to get tested for COVID-19 if I have been exposed?**

Yes, get a COVID-19 test three to five days after you were exposed.

**50. Where can I get tested for COVID-19?**

Please [click here](#) for a list of FREE locations where you can get tested in Jeffco. JCPH has also created this [COVID-19 Testing Resources Guide](#) that explains various testing options.

## QUARANTINE & ISOLATION

### 51. I'm fully vaccinated. Do I need to quarantine if I have been exposed to COVID-19?

If you're fully vaccinated, you don't need to quarantine after being exposed to someone with COVID-19. However, we recommend that you get a COVID-19 test three to five days after exposure and wear a mask in public for 14 days after exposure or until you have a negative test result. These precautions will help protect the people around you in the rare case of a breakthrough infection. If you develop any symptoms of COVID-19 in the 14 days after exposure, you should get tested, even if you have a previous negative test.

### 52. When should I isolate, and how do I do it?

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, OR if you develop symptoms, [follow isolation instructions](#). These instructions are for people who have been told to isolate or who are voluntarily isolating due to symptoms. A person's residence is the preferred setting for isolation.

### 53. When should I quarantine, and how do I do it?

These [quarantine instructions](#) are for people who need to quarantine because they have been exposed to COVID-19 and are not fully vaccinated. Exposure occurs when people have a household member or close contact who:

- Has a positive COVID-19 test, or;
- Has symptoms of COVID-19, or;
- Is getting ill and thinks they might have COVID-19. Symptoms, especially early on, may be mild and feel like a common cold. Early symptoms could include a combination of cough, body aches, fatigue, and chest tightness. Some people may not develop a fever until several days into the illness.

## MASKS/FACE COVERINGS

### 54. What science or data supports masking?

Mask-wearing and vaccination are the two most important tools Coloradans can use to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and bring us closer to ending the pandemic. Many different peer-reviewed studies show that masks help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Masks work by reducing the amount of infectious respiratory particles in the air. More studies on masks are being added to the scientific literature every month. For a current review of scientific studies around masking to prevent COVID-19, visit the [CDC's Science Brief](#).

### 55. What expert medical and public health groups support masking in schools?

Mask-wearing in schools is supported nearly universally by national, state and local medical and public health professional organizations including:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)
- Colorado Chapters of
  - American Academy of Pediatrics
  - American College of Emergency Physicians
  - Aurora-Adams Medical Society
  - Colorado Academy of Family Physicians
  - Colorado Chapter of the American College of Physicians
  - Colorado Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Society
  - Colorado Ear Nose and Throat Society
  - Colorado Medical Society
  - Colorado Psychiatric Society
  - Denver Medical Society
  - Foothills Medical Society
  - Northern Colorado Medical Society
  - PEDIATRIX/MEDNAX Medical Group
- Colorado Children’s Hospital
- JCPH and all other LPHAs in all 7 Metro Denver area counties

#### **56. Does masking harm mental health?**

No. While we know that wearing a mask isn’t always comfortable, there is no persuasive evidence that masks affect the mental health of children and teens. [Read more information about masks and mental health from CDPHE.](#)

Children’s Hospital Colorado also recently released this strong position on masking and mental health: “Masks are not harmful to children’s mental health. There is no scientific evidence to support this claim ... Getting back to school safely – in masks – will benefit children’s mental health after more than a year of uncertainty and strain.” To see more from Children’s Hospital Colorado, including this statement, please refer to their [Q&A: Back to School in Year Two of the COVID Pandemic webpage](#). Additionally, check out their webpage, [“Masks for Kids: What You Need to Know About Face Coverings.”](#) (Note: If these links do not open right away when you click them, try right clicking and copy/pasting the links directly in your web browser).

#### **57. Where can I get a mask/face covering?**

You can make or buy your own. Many retail stores sell masks. CDC has a [video about making your own mask](#).

## VARIANTS

### 58. What are variants, and how do they emerge?

If you think about a virus like a tree growing and branching out; each branch on the tree is slightly different than the others. By comparing the branches, scientists can label them according to the differences. These small differences, or [variants](#), have been studied and identified since the beginning of the pandemic. Some variations allow the virus to spread more easily or make it resistant to treatments or vaccines. Those variants must be monitored more carefully.

Variants are expected. The best way to slow the emergence of new variants is to reduce the spread of infection by taking measures to protect yourself including getting a COVID-19 vaccine when available. Learn more from CDC's [About Variants](#) webpage.

### 59. Is the Delta variant in Colorado?

Yes, it's estimated that [nearly all COVID-19 cases](#) in the state are due to the Delta variant.

### 60. How is the Delta variant different from previous strains?

The Delta variant causes more infections and spreads faster than early forms of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. For more information about variants, visit CDC's [About Variants](#) page.

### 61. Do the vaccines protect against the Delta variant?

Yes. People who are fully vaccinated are protected from the Delta variant. Getting vaccinated also protects others around you. Current data suggests that vaccination reduces the spread of infection, leading to fewer opportunities for new variants to develop and spread.

### 62. Besides Delta, are there other variants I should be concerned about?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is constantly changing, and new variants of the virus are expected to occur. You can view more information about Variants of Concern in the U.S. on CDC's webpage [here](#).



## CURRENT DATA

### 63. Where can I find the current COVID-19 data for Jeffco?

Jefferson County Public Health manages a data dashboard that is updated with extensive Jefferson County-specific COVID-19 data every Monday, including cases, hospitalizations, vaccine coverage and more. View the dashboard on our website at [www.jeffco.us/4007/Case-Summary](http://www.jeffco.us/4007/Case-Summary).

### 64. Where is data that shows how COVID-19 affects kids?

Children can get COVID-19 and spread it to others. For more information about COVID-19 by age, view JCPH's data dashboard at [www.jeffco.us/4007/Case-Summary](http://www.jeffco.us/4007/Case-Summary).

View CDPHE's state-level data on this topic [here](#). (View the "demographics" section to see data by age).

View CDC's national-level data on this topic [here](#). (You can view "demographic trends" on this page, including information by age).