

COVID-19 DELTA VARIANT: What You Need to Know

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THE DELTA VARIANT

The Delta variant is more contagious than its predecessors, with roughly a two-to-three-fold increase in the level of contagion from the original virus. With ~30% of the U.S. population and much of the world still unvaccinated, it's likely that future variants may emerge.

VACCINES ARE THE KEY TO ENDING THE PANDEMIC

Viruses evolve and change. Once a virus enters a host, it replicates, which can cause it to mutate in a way that gives it an advantage. It may infect the next person more efficiently or may replicate at a faster rate. The more a virus spreads, the more it can change. With over 200M cases, SARS-CoV-2 had, and still has, many chances to mutate. **The best way to prevent the emergence of new and more worrisome variants is to vaccinate everybody in the world.**

VACCINES SAVE LIVES

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Not only is the rate of infection reduced, but vaccines are highly effective against hospitalization and death is substantial for all current variants. 99% of COVID-related deaths are unvaccinated individuals.

BREAKTHROUGH CASES

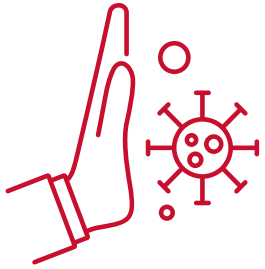
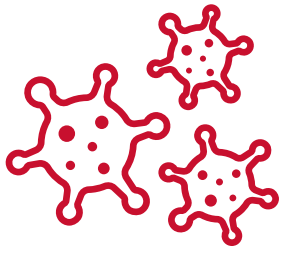
Those who are vaccinated and exposed are less likely to get infected. However, breakthrough cases can still occur, particularly in areas with increases in COVID-19 cases. Importantly, fully vaccinated individuals who test positive for COVID-19 usually have mild symptoms and don't suffer serious illness. **While it is likely there will be more outbreaks among fully vaccinated individuals, vaccines reduce the risk of infection by a factor of 8 and hospitalization and death by a factor of 25.**

BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Vaccine mandates are advised, especially for public-facing institutions, such as schools and hospitals. In the absence of a company-wide vaccine mandate, employers should encourage vaccines, require frequent testing and indoor masking, and practice social distancing.

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT PANDEMIC

The discoveries made through the science behind the mRNA- and vector-based vaccines have laid the foundation for more rapid discovery and response in future pandemics. Combined with these new modalities for vaccine development, it's imperative that public health officials and governments at every level learn from the missteps earlier in the pandemic. Public officials must be more aggressive in setting up testing infrastructure and implementing necessary restrictions earlier on to be effective. **It is also critical to avoid politicization of disease response and vaccinations.**



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SOURCE:

Adapted from the **Massachusetts High Technology Council's** August 10, 2021 COVID-19 Response Virtual Roundtable: Delta Variant. Please visit <http://www.mhtc.org/> to learn more.