



Public Health Brief

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While we have all been distracted by the effects of the Tamarack Fire these last few weeks, COVID-19 has been rearing its ugly head throughout the country. New data becomes available every day. Consequently, guidance continues to develop and change in response to new science-based information. Here is the latest:

Delta variant and COVID-19 vaccines

- The Delta variant is now rapidly increasing in all regions of California, responsible for >80% of cases sequenced in July.
- Vaccine effectiveness for the prevention of symptomatic and asymptomatic cases is >80% - unvaccinated persons are 7 times more likely to test positive than vaccinated persons.
- As more people become vaccinated, breakthrough infections will occur more frequently.
- The Delta virus produces similar amounts of virus (>1,000 times higher than previous strains) in vaccinated and unvaccinated people if they get infected.
- If they get infected, vaccinated persons can spread the virus as easily as unvaccinated persons.
- But since vaccinated persons don't get infected as often, the vast majority of transmission is occurring in unvaccinated persons and through unvaccinated people.
- The COVID vaccine continue to be your best tool to prevent serious illness, hospitalization, and death.



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Alpine County Health Department, 75-B Diamond Valley Rd., Markleeville, CA 96120

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Here are the most recent numbers through July 28th in California:

	Unvaccinated	Vaccinated
Case rate/100,000	20.7	3.5
Hospitalization rate/100,000	0.36	0.03
Death rate/100,000	0.1	0

- Case rates are highest among those 18-49 years of age and rising quickly. Hospitalization rates are higher in those >50 years of age.

Face Masks

In addition to vaccines, masking is another necessary tool in our toolbox. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that people in areas with high or substantial COVID-19 transmission should resume wearing masks indoors. It is also said that even jurisdictions without substantial or high transmission might consider expanding preventive strategies to include masking in indoor public places regardless of vaccination status. This would be particularly true for large public gatherings that include travelers from many areas with different levels of transmission. The following are links to the current guidance from the CDC and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) regarding masking:

[When You've Been Fully Vaccinated | CDC](#)

[Masks - Coronavirus COVID-19 Response \(ca.gov\)](#)

Alpine County

Alpine County currently has the lowest case rate in the state – see [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#). Therefore, we are suggesting that residents and visitors consider, but are not mandated, to wear masks in public indoor settings, especially when with other persons whose vaccination status is unknown, and/or if you are immune compromised or elderly or have contact with someone who is. For those of you who live and/or shop in neighboring counties, remember that **ALL of our neighboring jurisdictions are in the HIGH or substantial transmission category**. So, please wear your mask when indoors in those locations. This is all about the movement of people. We have 2 residents who contracted COVID when evacuated from the Tamarack Fire and stayed with family in a neighboring jurisdiction. A family with a member who works in Alpine County but lives in a neighboring county is now quarantined after one of them had contact with a positive case in Reno.

Our hearts go out to all affected by the fire but let us not forget to use the tools we have to protect ourselves, our families, and our community from COVID – VACCINES AND MASKS! Stay safe and healthy!



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