

PFT COVID Update 7-21-21: Delta Pandemic - Restrictions - Changing Anti-Vax Minds - Links

CORONAVIRUS



Updates

"A Pandemic Of The Unvaccinated."

The general thrust of our [last COVID update](#) over a month ago was twofold:

1. **Get vaccinated if you safely can.** Encourage others to get vaccinated as well. It's our safest, best and most powerful defense against this virus.
2. **Beware of the Delta Variant.** Back then we warned that this variant was spreading like wildfire overseas. Since then, the Delta variant has become the dominant strain of the virus in the United States.

The good news is, while Delta is far [more contagious than the original strain of COVID](#), it does not seem to be significantly more deadly.

But the bad news is that far too many people (*for far too many suspect reasons*) have adopted a willfully stubborn non-vaccination stance that is currently putting pockets of our population (geographically and demographically) at significant risk for contracting—and perhaps dying from—the Coronavirus.

So much so that the C.D.C. director recently came forward with an astonishing statement about the status of the Coronavirus pandemic in the United States.

"There is a clear message that is coming through: This is becoming a pandemic of the unvaccinated," said Dr. Rochelle Walensky at a briefing of the White House COVID-19 Response Team on Friday July 16 . "Our biggest concern is we are going to continue to see preventable cases, hospitalizations and sadly deaths among the unvaccinated." -- Dr. Rochelle P. Walensky, CDC Director

[Click here to read the full NPR story.](#)

For more on the [communicability of Delta, click here](#). Use our resources below to help inform your vaccination decisions and considerations.

Restrictions Returning as Infection Rates Increase Once Again.

Many cities and some states are reinstating mask mandates due to a steady (*and sometimes prodigious*) rise in infections, hospitalizations and deaths. And though as a nation we are still far below the staggering infection and death rates from the turn of the year and before—the trend is undeniably moving toward a new round of restrictions based on anticipated increased infection rates that show no sign of changing before fall.

As a result, **PPS released it's first guidance on mask wearing** for the 2021-22 school year, recommending a return to mandatory masking indoors for all students, teachers and school staff. Social distancing rules remain in force, though safe social distance has dropped from 6 feet to 3 feet. In person classes are planned for five days a week, with all levels of sports returning as well as extracurricular activities.

[Read the complete Post-Gazette story here.](#)

Changing Minds—How To Encourage Vaccination Among Skeptics.

We all know reasonable people who've made the decision to not get the vaccine. *The New York Times* dedicated front pages of a recent newsletter to understanding vaccine hesitancy and outlining the three most likely ways to change people's minds about getting the vaccine.

Here is a summary of those approaches:

1. Reference that millions of others in the US and around the world have been safely vaccinated;
2. Seek out positive vaccine stories from doctors, friends and relatives alike--there are plenty out there;
3. Don't shy away from "missed opportunity" stories that demonstrate dire or tragic consequences of not getting a vaccine.

These grassroots, one-to-one approaches can play a critical roll in changing some hearts and minds. Every person matters when chasing true herd immunity.

[Click here to view the whole NY Times newsletter story.](#) (See the first feature in newsletter--very detailed and informative.)

Information Links That Bear Repeating:

Below please find additional links providing helpful information you can bookmark and count on as the COVID-19 situation changes and evolves.

[AFT/AFTPA Coronavirus Resources & Updates for Members](#)

[Find a Vaccine Provider Near You](#)

[AFT/PFT Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)

-- A Negotiated, Free Benefit to Members

[Click for EAP Information Flyer](#)

[Click for Life Skills Solutions Website](#) (*login upper right*)

[AFT Share My Lesson Stress Management Resources](#) (*searchable*)

[Download the PA COVID-Alert Tracking App](#)

[National Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) Coronavirus Resources](#)

[CDC Data Tracking Page](#)

[CDC Vaccine Information Landing Page](#)

[PPS Coronavirus Resources and Links](#)

[PA Department of Health Coronavirus Resources](#)

[PA-Specific Resources from Senator Casey](#)

[Student Debt Relief Resources](#)

[Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) Rumor Control](#)

[Coronavirus Testing Locations](#) (*view interactive map mid page*)



Coronavirus Self-Checker

A guide to help you make decisions and seek appropriate medical care

** PFT Coronavirus Updates Released Periodically As Needed **

Missed an update or message? [View our archive of COVID-19 Updates here](#).

Please keep in touch—keep sharing your ideas, your questions and your concerns.

In solidarity—

Nina Esposito-Visgitis