

PFT COVID Update 8-17-22: Back to School - CDC Relaxes Guidance - Biden's Lesson - Links

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To: Dan Evans <dan_evans@pft400.org>

CORONAVIRUS



Updates

Dear Dan

The State of the Covid Union as America Goes Back to School.

The new, dominant variant of the Coronavirus (BA.5) is more contagious than any previous variant. The good news is, with vaccination levels improved across all age groups and a sizable portion of the population having contracted the virus in some form, the net infectious damage caused by the BA.5 variant has been reduced.

However that doesn't mean we are in the Covid clear as school starts.

[Here's a closer look at the state of the Covid union from NebraskaMed.com](#) (*The University of Nebraska School of Medicine*). We selected this article because it touches on many of the questions and concerns we've heard related to the start of year number three under the weight of the Coronavirus.

The highlights:

- BA.5 is the most transmissible variant to date
- School-age children are the most likely of all age groups to get infected by COVID-19 – and spread it to others
- The latest variants are causing more reinfections than ever before

The long and short of it is – don't throw away your awesome N-95 masks just yet, and PLEASE commit all you've learned about social distancing and common-sense mitigation efforts to your long-term memory, just in case.

Chances are, certain higher transmission areas and groups of higher-risk people are going to need them again. Always keep in mind that someone around you may be immunocompromised

or in a higher-risk group (*or connected to someone who is*).

The CDC Officially Relaxes COVID Restrictions. Read Why, Here.

(And read why “relaxed” doesn’t mean forget everything we’ve learned.)

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has officially relaxed COVID-19 restrictions, [according to an article in The New Pittsburgh Courier](#). While variants have become more contagious, the percentage of people with either vaccine-related or virus-provided immunity has increased as well—markedly so in persons over age 16 across the country.

“We’re in a stronger place today as a nation, with more tools—like vaccination, boosters, and treatments—to protect ourselves, and our communities, from severe illness from COVID-19,” said Greta Massetti, PhD, the branch chief of the Field Epidemiology and Prevention Branch.

“We also have a better understanding of how to protect people from being exposed to the virus, like wearing high-quality masks, testing, and improved ventilation. This guidance acknowledges that the pandemic is not over, but also helps us move to a point where COVID-19 no longer severely disrupts our daily lives.”

We’re not out of the woods – however for many, there is a clearing up ahead. And that’s good news overall.

The Biden’s Dual Covid Experience Underscores Need For Vigilance.

Yesterday we learned that First Lady Dr. Jill Biden tested positive for COVID-19 a little more than a week after her husband announced his second positive test for Covid (*a likely “rebound” reinfection that happens to a small percentage of patients who take the antiviral Paxlovid*).

While Dr. Biden’s prognosis is excellent, her case serves to illustrate the highly transmissible nature of the BA.5 variant.

[According to this article from CNN.com](#), the First Lady has traveled to 40 states, many of which were for Covid-related events that included discussing vaccines, reopening plans, and the importance of booster shots. She spent several days last summer crisscrossing the southern United States pleading with Americans to get their shots.

"I want to make the point that people don't think they'll be affected. They think it won't happen to them, and then it does -- and then it's too late. I don't want them to take their health for granted," she told CNN in an interview last July as she encouraged vaccines in Savannah, Georgia.

Be careful out there!

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.

[CDC Monkeypox Information & Tracker \(NEW!\)](#)

[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](#) (*includes login info*)

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

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

[Download the PA COVID-Alert Tracking App](#) (*Warning App Deactivated 7-27-22*)

[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 —

Dan Evans

PFT Communications Director

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