

February 28, 2022

**HEALTH ADVISORY:**  
COVID-19 Face Covering  
Order

**February 28, 2022**

This document will be updated as new information becomes available.

St. Louis County Department of Public Health (DPH) is now using 4 types of documents to provide important information to medical and public health professionals, and to other interested persons:

**Health Alerts** convey information of the highest level of importance which warrants immediate action or attention from Missouri health providers, emergency responders, public health agencies, and/or the public.

**Health Advisories** provide important information for a specific incident or situation, including that impacting neighboring states; may not require immediate action.

**Health Guidances** contain comprehensive information pertaining to a particular disease or condition, and include recommendations, guidelines, etc. endorsed by DPH.

**Health Updates** provide new or updated information on an incident or situation; can also provide information to update a previously sent Health Alert, Health Advisory, or Health Guidance; unlikely to require immediate action.

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**FROM: Dr. Faisal Khan, Acting Director  
St. Louis County Department of Public Health**

**SUBJECT: COVID-19 Face Covering Order**

The purpose of this advisory is to inform the public about the current level of risk due to COVID-19 and update recommendations for protecting the health of St. Louis County residents.

The surge of COVID-19 infections and severe disease due to the Omicron variant has eased significantly. New cases per day have decreased from their peak of over 2,700 per day on January 8, 2022 to about 117 per day on February 25, 2022. The number of COVID-19 patients hospitalized in the St. Louis metropolitan area has decreased from a high of 1,444 on January 17, 2022 to 310 on February 23, 2022.

As of February 26, 2022, St. Louis County is classified as in the “medium” level of the CDC’s new COVID-19 community levels. (To learn more about CDC’s new “community levels”, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/community-levels.html>.) In acknowledgment of this decrease in risk, a face covering order is no longer in effect as of February 28, 2022.

The CDC currently recommends the following prevention behaviors for individuals and households when in the “medium” level:

- If you are immunocompromised or high risk for severe disease, talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions (e.g., testing)
- If you have household or social contact with someone at high risk for severe disease
  - Consider self-testing to detect infection before contact
  - Consider wearing a mask when indoors with them
- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters
- Maintain improved ventilation throughout indoor spaces when possible
- Follow CDC and Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services recommendations for isolation and quarantine, including getting tested if you are exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19
- If you are immunocompromised or high risk for severe disease
  - Have a plan for rapid testing if needed (e.g., having home tests or access to testing)
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you are a candidate for treatments like oral antivirals, PrEP, and monoclonal antibodies.

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The CDC recommends the following community-level prevention strategies when in the “medium” level:

- Protect people at high risk for severe illness or death by ensuring equitable access to vaccination, testing, treatment, support services, and information
- Consider implementing screening testing or other testing strategies for people who are exposed to COVID-19 in workplaces, schools, or other community settings as appropriate
- Implement enhanced prevention measures in high-risk congregate settings (see guidance for correctional facilities and homeless shelters)
- Distribute and administer vaccines to achieve high community vaccination coverage and ensure health equity
- Maintain improved ventilation in public indoor spaces
- Ensure access to testing, including through point-of-care and at-home tests for all people
- Communicate with organizations and places that serve people who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease to ensure they know how to get rapid testing
- Ensure access and equity in vaccination, testing, treatment, community outreach, support services for disproportionately affected populations

Because more than 1 in 3 residents of St. Louis County (37%) are not fully vaccinated as of February 26, very young children are not yet eligible for vaccination, and people at risk of severe disease (people with diabetes, cancer, heart disease, immunocompromising conditions, and others) live and work throughout our community, DPH still recommends wearing face coverings in indoor public settings.

The Department of Public Health will continue to monitor the level of risk in our community and will provide updates as may be needed to protect the health and wellbeing of St. Louis County residents.

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