

Washington State Family to Family Health Information Center



Newsletter #6 – August 2021

Delta Variant Causes COVID Surge

Over the last two months, the delta variant of COVID has become the dominant strain of the virus, all but eradicating other variants and the original COVID-19 strain amongst new COVID cases in Washington. The [latest genetic sequencing data shows](#) that the delta variant cases made up almost 58% of specimens collected between June 20 and July 3, while projections estimate that on July 19th that around 92% of new cases were the delta variant. While the delta variant is highly contagious (almost twice as transmissible as the original Wuhan strain), the mortality rate from this variant does not appear to be as high as other strains of the virus. Due to the increased transmission rates, estimates of statewide new infections [increased sharply around the end of June](#), when the delta variant started to dominate.

With 57.6% of Washingtonians fully vaccinated, the [immunized make up only 2% of new COVID cases](#). The other 98% of new COVID cases, most of which are the delta variant, are amongst the unvaccinated. The rate of “breakthrough cases,” in which previously vaccinated individuals contract COVID, is [0.8% in the state of Washington](#). While vaccinated individuals are at far less risk of contracting any variant of the COVID vaccine, they can possibly transmit the disease to the unvaccinated.

If further, up-to-minute information on COVID is needed, the DoH has a COVID-19 Assistance Hotline at 1-800-525-0127.

August 2021 Calendar

All events are free and on-line

- [Helping Our Children Develop Meaningful Relationships](#) – August 3rd
- [Serving on Groups That Make Decisions for Families](#) – August 10-12th
- [Genetic Counseling for Rare and Undiagnosed Conditions](#) – August 12th
- [Sharing Down Syndrome Pierce County](#) – August 13th
- [Washington Statewide Leadership Initiative Conference](#) – August 24th
- [WiSe Virtual Gathering](#) – August 24th
- [Partnering to Make the Most of Child Development Supports](#) – August 25th

Mask Mandates for Back-to-School

The Washington State Department of Health released [updated guidance for the 2021-2022 school year](#). Amongst the most prominent guidelines are a mask mandate for all children, staff, and teachers, regardless of vaccination status, social distancing, and quarantine protocols. Vaccines are not required for children returning to school this fall. Unlike the OSPI (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction,) the DoH does have the authority to dictate the conditions under which school districts will re-open for the new school year. They state:

“For the 2021-2022 school year, schools must plan to provide full time in-person education for all interested students with the following required mitigation measures: face coverings/masks, physical distancing, improving ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, cleaning and disinfecting, staying home when sick and seeking evaluation, testing as indicated, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, responding to cases of COVID-19, and meeting the reporting requirements to public health. *Physical distancing should not prevent a school from offering full-time, in-person learning to all students/families in the fall.”*