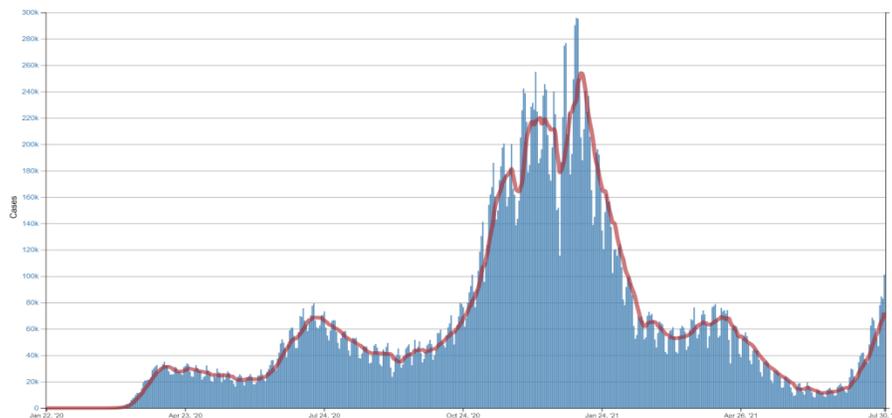


## COVID-19 Update: The Delta Variant

1. The delta variant of COVID-19 is for all intents and purposes a ***new disease***. As expected with viruses, COVID-19 has mutated over time, the same way influenza does every year and why the flu vaccine is redesigned yearly to account for the new mutations.
2. The Delta variant has been confirmed to spread at least ***3 times as fast*** as the original COVID-19 version did in March 2020.
3. Delta variant infection is ***2 times more likely*** to result in a person being hospitalized.
4. A person infected with the delta variant is ***2 times more likely*** to die from the disease.
5. Delta is spreading rapidly in all 50 states (and world-wide). On July 30, Florida reported **21,683** new cases were reported...the highest daily record set for the pandemic. As of August 1, more than **10,200** people in Florida were hospitalized with confirmed COVID-19.
6. This chart demonstrates the current rising of cases in the US. It is anticipated that by October of this year the cases will surpass the numbers we saw in 2020.

Daily Trends in Number of COVID-19 Cases in the United States Reported to CDC



7. In North Carolina, the number of reported COVID-19 cases increased 85% in the past week. In Craven County cases have increased **45%** in the past 7 days.

### Questions:

8. Am I still at risk for becoming infected with the delta variant if I have already been vaccinated?

**Answer:** Yes...estimates are that at least 20% of all new cases are now occurring in people already vaccinated. Data now suggests that the efficacy of the vaccines is approximately 80-84% against the delta variant.

9. If I am vaccinated and I test positive for the virus, will I get sick?

**Answer:** This is the great news...while you may develop symptoms, it is **rare** that vaccinated people who are infected are requiring hospitalization, and **extremely rare** that vaccinated people are dying.

10. Can I spread the virus if I have an asymptomatic infection, but I have already been vaccinated?

**Answer:** Yes...unlike earlier versions of the virus, the delta variant is some much more infectious that even vaccinated people appear to be capable of spreading the virus.

11. What should I do if I have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19?

**Answer:** The new recommendation by the CDC is: if you have been exposed to someone who is either suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19:

- i. Get tested 3-5 days following the known exposure.
- ii. Wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure or until you test negative.
- iii. Isolate if you test positive for COVID-19 in the prior 10 days or are experiencing symptoms.

12. Should vaccinated people wear a mask when indoors?

**Answer:** Yes...this is now being recommended across the country. Wearing masks in public indoors settings where you **do not know the vaccination status** of all the people around you. This is critical in insuring that you do not become infected....and that you do not then risk infecting other members of your family.

Fully vaccinated might also choose to mask regardless of the potential level of transmission if you or someone in your household is immunocompromised or at increased risk for severe disease if infected. This includes older adults and those with certain medical conditions such as: diabetes, heart conditions, cancer, overweight or obesity.

13. Are there any other ways to decrease the risk of becoming infected?

**Answer:** Yes...if you are not already vaccinated, do not wait to make the decision to get the vaccine. RNA vaccines are not new technology. They have been used for decades. Millions of people world-wide have received the vaccine. The risk of dying after receiving the vaccine is infinitesimally small..... calculated at approximately **0.002%** (to put this into perspective: the chance of dying from a bleeding ulcer after taking daily ibuprofen or low-dose aspirin is approximately .0153%, which is about 8 times higher!)

***In short... the vaccines continue to be tremendously effective against life-threatening infection. Vaccination is the only sure way of preventing serious infection, long-term symptoms following infection, and dying from COVID-19 infection.***

If you have any questions or concerns, again feel free to email me: [dzirkman@yahoo.com](mailto:dzirkman@yahoo.com)

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