



## Press Release - For Immediate Release

August 5, 2021 5:00 PM

- Latest COVID-19 information from Teton Valley Health CEO, Keith Gnagey
- Governor Little urges people to get vaccinated or risk school interruptions in the upcoming school year
- How to get a COVID-19 vaccine

The Teton County Emergency Management Team would like to assure residents and visitors alike that we are carefully monitoring the recent surge of the COVID-19 cases including the delta variant. We continue to meet with local agencies to make sure we are doing all we can to protect our community during the ongoing pandemic.

### LATEST COVID-19 INFORMATION

Teton Valley Health CEO Keith Gnagey explained, “We are still learning about COVID-19, how to prevent it, how to treat it, and the impact of COVID-19 if you get it.” This is what we know now:

- Mask usage, vaccinations, social distancing, and good hygiene are still effective methods to prevent COVID-19.
  - o All three EUA-approved vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna, and Janssen/J&J) are highly effective against COVID-19.
  - o No vaccine is yet approved for children under the age of 12; several are in testing.
  - o Vaccinations are recommended even if you have had COVID-19. While some immunity occurs naturally among patients who have had COVID-19, we are not sure of the length and strength of that immunity.
  - o The vaccines are very safe. There are known side effects from the vaccines; they vary by vaccine and they impact people differently. Most people experience temporary mild or no side effects.
  - o There are very few types of diseases or conditions that prevent you from getting a vaccine. Visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html#underlying-conditions> for up to date data on clinical issues affecting vaccinations. If in doubt, please ask your provider for advice.
  - o **In Idaho, over 94 percent of the new cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are in the unvaccinated (March 15 to July 15, 2021).**
  - o “Breakthrough” cases, cases where a fully vaccinated person gets COVID-19, do occur
    - The large majority of these cases are milder and less acute, requiring hospitalization much less frequently than cases among the unvaccinated.
  - o Studies are still ongoing about how long the protection from vaccines lasts.
- Variants are a normal part of a virus’s life cycle and we expect COVID-19 to continue to morph into new variants as long as COVID-19 persists. We may also see new strains. A strain has different physical properties from the original virus and may behave differently. Variants often have different rates of transmission and cause different levels of acuity in patients. They may also affect different age groups in different ways. **Testing to date indicates that the three EUA-approved vaccines are effective against the known variants.** The degree of effectiveness does vary by variant.
- The delta variant is the predominant variant now in the US (over 80% of the new cases are delta). The delta variant is twice as transmissible as prior variants.
  - o **East Idaho News reported that the delta variant has become the predominant virus in Idaho.** Delta was detectable in 81% of the samples the Idaho Bureau of Labs tested from June 19, 2021 to July 19, 2021.
- CDC and other medical guidance on the need for mask usage and social distancing has varied since the pandemic began. We expect that guidance to continue to change as new variants appear and as we learn more about the virus. Regardless of those changes in when, how, and where to use masks and socially distance, **mask usage, vaccinations, social distancing, and good hygiene remain the most effective methods to prevent COVID-19.**



## In Summary

The more frequently you mask, the better the quality of the mask, the more frequently you practice social distancing, and the better your hand hygiene the less your risk of getting COVID-19 and of giving it to others. Fully vaccinating reduces your chances of getting COVID more than all of those other factors combined. Nothing you do can guarantee that you won't get COVID-19 or give it to someone else. But you can significantly reduce the risk with the actions you take.

## GOVERNOR LITTLE WARNS OF SCHOOL INTERRUPTIONS IF MORE DON'T GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE

"Simply put, we need more Idahoans to choose to receive the vaccine for kids to have a chance at a normal school year, one that is entirely in person, without outbreaks and quarantines," Little said.

While a normal school year is of concern, the vulnerability of children under the age of 12 being infected and becoming very ill is even more daunting. "COVID-19 infections among those younger than 12 have doubled in the past two weeks," Epidemiologist Kathryn Turner said. Dave Jeppeson, Director of the Department of Health and Welfare, said "Officials are concerned as the school year begins and younger children aren't eligible for the vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued recommendations for K-12 school students to wear masks, though it's up to individual school boards to determine mandates."

The Teton County School District 401 Board will meet on Monday, August 9, 2021 to review their COVID Operations Plan. You may listen to the live stream of the meeting by visiting:

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=teton+county+school+district+401](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=teton+county+school+district+401)

To view the entire article from East Idaho News please visit:

<https://www.eastidahonews.com/2021/08/idaho-gov-brad-little-warns-of-school-interruptions-if-more-dont-get-covid-vaccine/>

## HOW TO GET A VACCINE

Vaccinations are now available for anyone aged 12 or over at the following:

- The Driggs Clinic: walk-ins accepted Tuesday - Friday from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm.
- Corner Drug: Sign up for an appointment on their website <https://www.driggspharmacy.com/>
- Broulim's pharmacy: For details visit [https://broulims.com/covid-19\\_vaccine](https://broulims.com/covid-19_vaccine)
- Eastern Idaho Public Health: Call 208-533-3223.

New information will be published as soon as it is available. For all COVID-19 information, please visit:

<https://coronavirus-response-tetonidaho.hub.arcgis.com/>

Thank you for doing your part to protect our community.

Teton Valley Strong!