

# Public Health COVID-19 update

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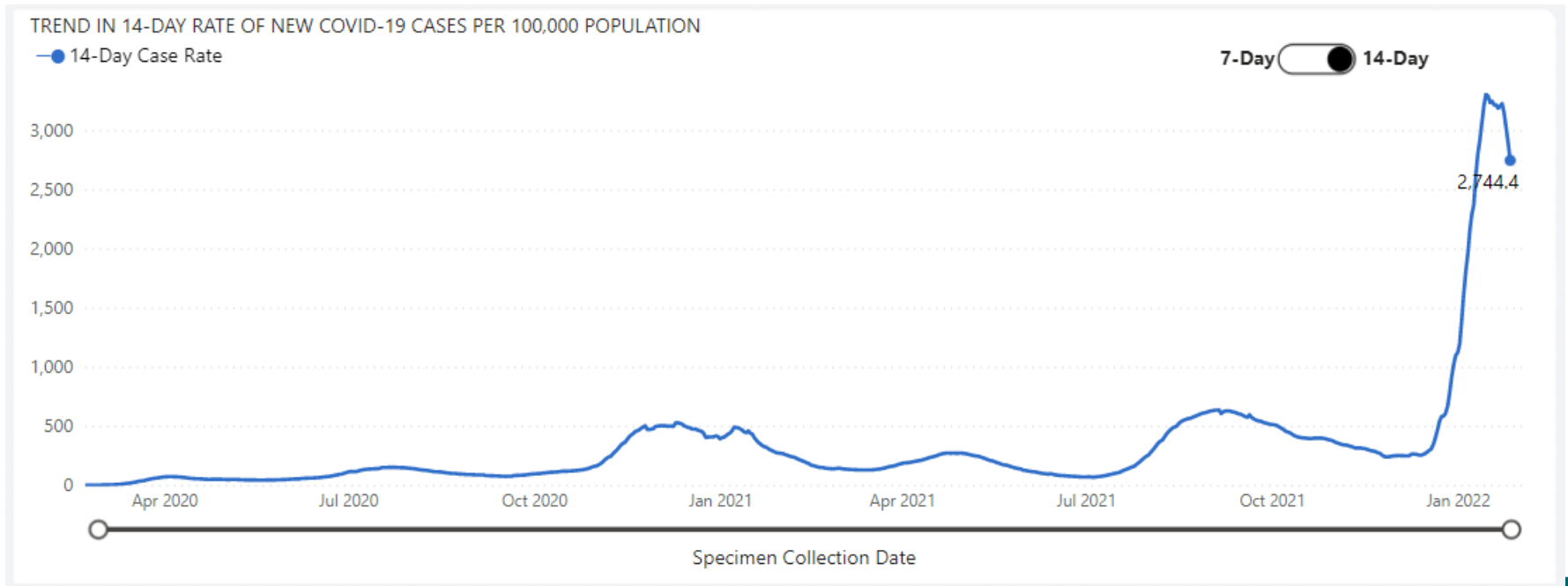
Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH

Feb. 14, 2022



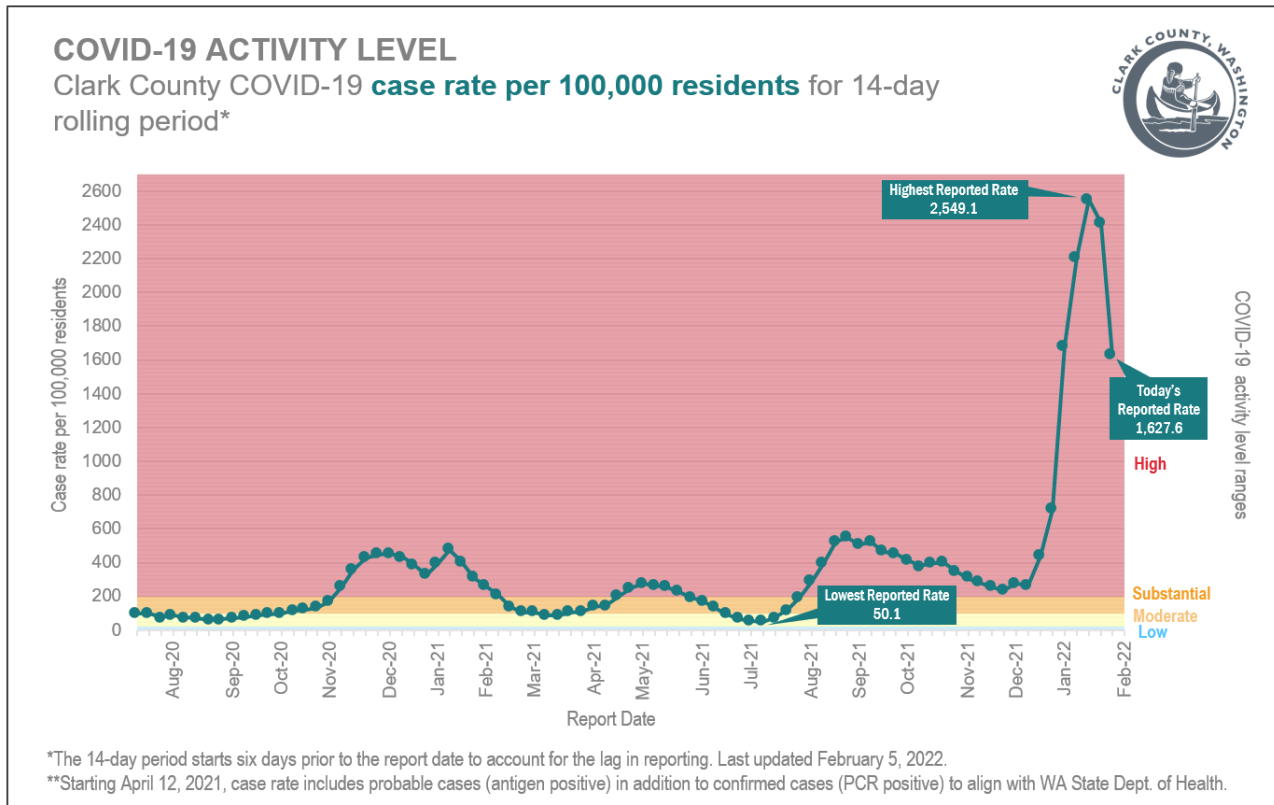
# Washington COVID-19 activity

- Statewide COVID-19 case rates are decreasing but remain very high.
  - 14-day rate through Jan. 27 (most recent complete data) is 2,744 cases per 100,000 people.
- Statewide rate of new hospitalizations is also beginning to decrease.
  - 7-day rate as of Jan. 27 is 26.4 new admissions per 100,000 people
- Deaths remain high statewide and do not appear to be decreasing yet.



# Clark County COVID-19 activity

- COVID-19 activity in Clark County is also decreasing but remains high.
  - 14-day rate as of Feb. 5 (preliminary data) is 1,627.6 cases per 100,000 people.
  - Peak 14-day rate was 2,549 cases per 100,000 in late January.



# Clark County COVID-19 activity

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- Clark County COVID-19 hospitalizations are still high.
  - Rate of new hospitalizations was decreasing but started to increase again recently.
  - 7-day rate as of Jan. 26 is 22 new admissions per 100,000 people
- Clark County hospital occupancy, as of Tuesday Feb. 8:
  - 97% of beds occupied
  - 98% of ICU beds occupied
  - 26% of beds occupied by COVID-19 cases and PUIs
  - 36% of ICU beds are occupied by COVID-19 cases and PUIs
  - 107 COVID-19 cases and 27 PUI hospitalized
- Clark County COVID-19 deaths remain high and have not begun to decrease yet.



# COVID-19 variants

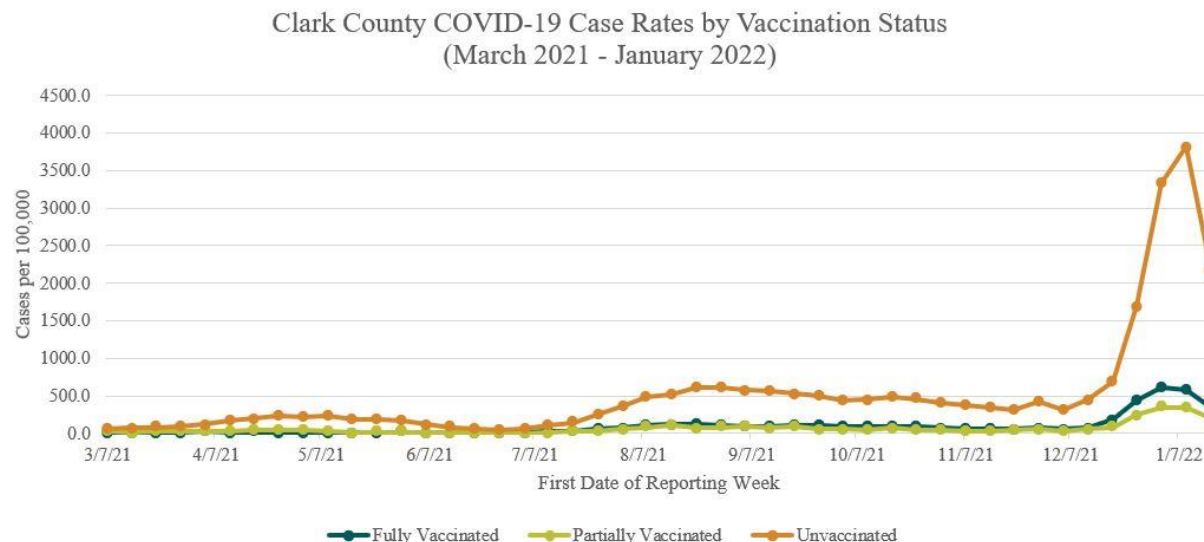
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- Omicron variant continues to be the predominant strain circulating in Washington and across the US.
- The percentage of US cases attributed to the omicron BA.2 subvariant is small but is increasing.
  - For the week ending Feb. 5, the BA.2 subvariant accounted for 3.6% of cases.
    - Up from 1.2% the previous week.
- The BA.2 subvariant has been detected in Washington, but Department of Health data categorizes by variants of concern, not by subvariants, so no data on percentage of cases attributed to BA.2 is available.
- COVID-19 vaccines continue to be very effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death from infection with omicron variant.
  - But the number of infections among fully vaccinated people (vaccine breakthrough) has increased since omicron became the predominant variant.
  - Early data also shows more reinfections are also occurring with omicron.



# Clark County cases by vaccination status

- Clark County data through Jan. 22, **while omicron was the predominant strain circulating**, shows that case, hospitalization and death rates continue to be highest among people who are unvaccinated.
- During the most recent week of complete data, the rate for unvaccinated:
  - cases was **more than 6 times higher** than fully vaccinated
  - hospitalizations was **5 ½ times higher** than fully vaccinated
  - deaths was **nearly 7 times higher** than fully vaccinated



# COVID-19 precautions

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- While the omicron surge appears to be subsiding locally and statewide, COVID-19 case rates are still significantly higher than during past waves.
- People should continue to take precautions to prevent themselves from getting and spreading COVID-19:
  - Get vaccinated and boosted, when eligible.
  - Wear a well-fitting face mask around others. Wear a cloth mask with multiple layers, double mask (cloth mask over a surgical mask) or wear N95s/KN95s for greater protection.
  - Consider skipping large gatherings or events, especially if you're often around people at high risk for severe illness.
  - Stay home if you have symptoms of COVID-19, except to seek testing or medical care.
  - Wash hands frequently and disinfect high-touch surfaces.



# COVID-19 testing

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- COVID-19 testing continues to be available at medical offices, pharmacies and other testing sites in Clark County.
- Demand for testing increased dramatically as case numbers surged.
- Facilities faced staffing challenges due to sick employees and more patients being needing hospital care. Facilities were also continuing to staff clinics offering vaccinations and therapeutics.
  - As a result, some sites temporarily limited testing (e.g., only testing people with symptoms or those at high-risk for serious illness).
- Demand for testing has begun to decrease as virus activity slows and at-home tests become more widely available.





# At-home COVID-19 tests

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- Two new web portals available for the general public to order at-home tests.
  - Free rapid antigen tests delivered directly to homes.
  - Ordering requires only a name and address.
- Federal program: [www.COVIDtests.gov](https://www.COVIDtests.gov)
  - One kit with 4 tests per household
- Washington Department of Health program: [www.sayyescovidhometest.org](https://www.sayyescovidhometest.org)
  - One kit with 4-5 tests per household
  - DOH reopens ordering as the state receives additional supply.
- People with health insurance can also receive up to 8 at-home tests per person each month for free.
  - Some insurers are providing tests through pharmacies with no up-front costs, others require payment up front but insurance reimburses costs.



# What to do if you test positive

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- Everyone who tests positive for COVID-19 should stay home and away from others (isolate) for at least 5 days.
  - Day 1 is the first full day after symptoms develop or after the test date if you don't have symptoms.
- Isolation can end after 5 days if:
  - You've been fever free (without fever-reducing medicine) for at least 24 hours
  - Other symptoms are improving
- After 5 days of isolation, you should continue to take precautions for another 5 full days:
  - Wear a well-fitting mask around others, including at home
  - Avoid traveling
  - Avoid going places where you cannot wear a mask
  - Avoid going around people at high risk for COVID-19 illness
- If symptoms aren't improving after 5 days or you cannot wear a mask, continue to isolate at home for the full 10 days.



# COVID-19 vaccination

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- COVID-19 vaccines continue to provide the best protection against infection, hospitalization and death – including against new variants.
  - Getting a booster dose increases protection.
- Everyone 5 years and older is eligible to get vaccinated.
  - Pfizer is submitting data and a request for vaccine Emergency Use Authorization for children 6 months through 4 years.
  - FDA and CDC advisory groups will meet in the coming weeks to consider authorizing the vaccine for children younger than 5.
- Everyone 12 years and older is eligible to get a COVID-19 booster dose:
  - 5 months after receiving the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna
  - 2 months after receiving the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine
- People who are fully vaccinated and receive their booster dose when eligible are considered “up to date” on their vaccinations.



# COVID-19 vaccination

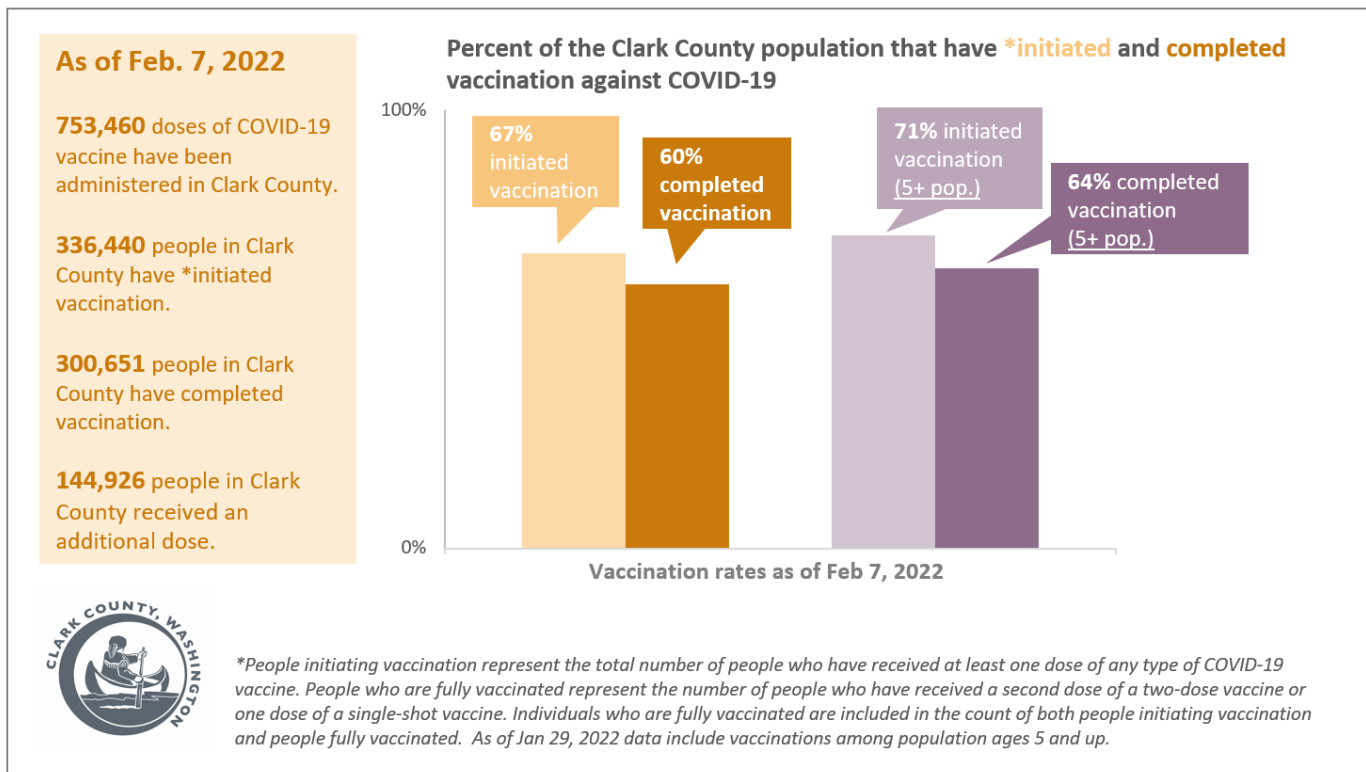
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- A [new report](#) from the CDC shows that while delta and omicron variants were circulating, case and hospitalization rates were **highest** among people who were unvaccinated and **lowest** among people who were fully vaccinated and received a booster dose.
- Report looked at case and hospitalization rates in Los Angeles County Nov. 7, 2021-Jan. 8, 2022.
  - Throughout that period, rates were consistently highest for unvaccinated people and lowest for people who were vaccinated and boosted.
- During the most recent week (Jan. 8), when omicron was the predominant strain circulating:
  - the case rate was **3.6 times higher** among unvaccinated compared to people vaccinated and boosted
  - the hospitalization rate was **23 times higher** among unvaccinated compared to people vaccinated and boosted



# COVID-19 vaccination

- In Clark County, about 64% of eligible residents (5+ years old) are fully vaccinated (about 300,600 people).
  - Statewide, about 70% are fully vaccinated.
- In Clark County, about 145,000 people have received an additional dose (booster or third dose for immunocompromised).

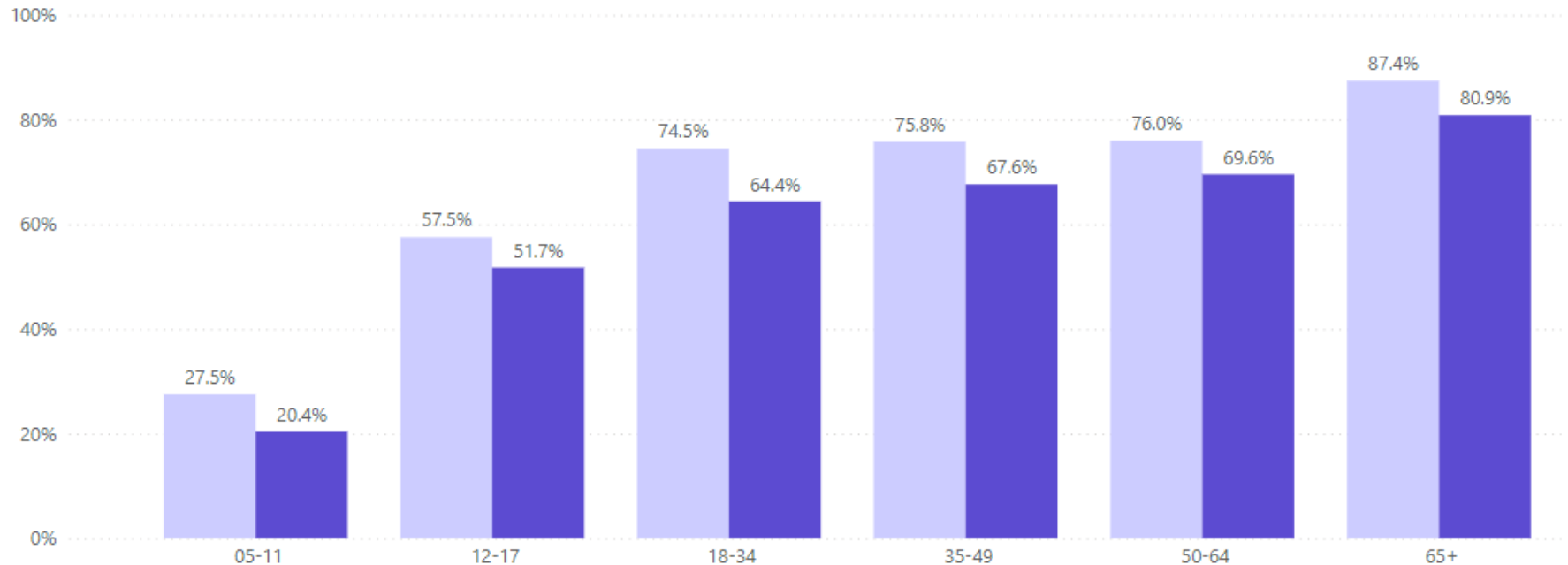


# Clark County COVID-19 vaccination by age

- Clark County vaccination rates continue to be highest among adults 65+ years and lowest among youth.
  - Kids 5-11 years old became eligible for vaccination in November.

PERCENT VACCINATED, WITHIN AGE GROUP

● Percent Initiating Vaccination Within Age Group ● Percent Fully Vaccinated Within Age Group



To protect privacy, counts of less than 10 are not reported. Some additional values that could allow someone to calculate those small numbers are also not reported.



# Proof of vaccination

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- Washington Department of Health created a digital COVID-19 record verification system called WA Verify.
  - [WAVerify.org](https://www.waverify.org)
  - More than 1 million people in the state have used WA Verify.
- People provide their name, date of birth and an email or phone number and will receive a link to download a QR code and digital copy of their COVID-19 vaccination record.
  - WA Verify uses records from the state immunization database.
- The digital record and QR codes are additional options for providing proof of vaccination if required by businesses, events or travel.
  - Other ways to provide proof of vaccination include COVID-19 vaccine cards (or a photocopy or digital photo of the card) or immunization records from your health care provider.
- People who need assistance with WA Verify, or correcting their vaccine records in the state database, can contact the state COVID-19 hotline: 800.525.0127, then press #.



# Face coverings

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- Face coverings continue to be an effective tool for slowing the spread of COVID-19.
- A [new report](#) from the CDC shows that consistent use of masks in indoor public settings was associated with lower odds of testing positive for COVID-19.
- Study looked at indoor mask use among California residents February to December 2021.
- Study found that people who consistently wore masks were less likely to get COVID-19:
  - 56% less likely for people who wore cloth masks
  - 66% less likely for people who wore surgical masks
  - 83% less likely for people who wore respirators, like N95s and KN95s





# Face coverings

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- Local pharmacies are distributing free N95 masks to the public.
  - Supply provided by the federal government.
- Several community organizations will also soon be distributing free masks to the public.
  - Supply provided by the state Department of Health.
  - Locations will be announced once the sites receive their masks and are ready to begin distributing them.
- Respirator masks can also be purchased in local stores or through online retailers.



# Face coverings

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- As case and hospitalization rates begin to decrease, Gov. Inslee and state Department of Health are considering when to lift the indoor mask mandate.
- Face coverings continue to be required in indoor public settings and schools under a statewide mask mandate.
  - Gov. Inslee is expected to announce a timeline for lifting the indoor mask mandate this week.
- The statewide face covering requirement for large outdoor events will be lifted this week (by Friday).
- Masks may continue to be required in certain settings, like health care facilities.
  - The federal mask requirement for public transportation will remain in place until lifted by the federal government.
- People can choose to continue wearing masks indoors, and masks may be recommended for some people, such as those at high risk for COVID-19 illness or who have children too young to be vaccinated.



# COVID-19 fatigue

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- Pandemic fatigue, or COVID-19 fatigue, is a natural and expected response to the prolonged stress people are enduring from being in a near constant state of vigilance for the last two years.
  - Stress comes from what we're experiencing, and the emotional and cognitive energy needed to continually respond to uncertainty and changing circumstances.
- Even daily activities require risk assessment and problem solving:
  - How many masks do I wear to the grocery store?
  - My childcare center is closing for a week. How do I balance caring for my child and working?
  - I have a cough. Could it be COVID-19? Where do I go to get tested?
  - Is it safe to gather with elderly family members for holidays?
- Proliferation of misinformation about COVID-19 can lead to people doubting recommendations and not perceiving the pandemic to be serious anymore.
  - Including effectiveness of masks and vaccines, infection-induced immunity compared to vaccine-induced immunity, seriousness of the virus ("it's just the flu")



# COVID-19 fatigue

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- As a result, pandemic fatigue can lead people to be less motivated to take protective measures – like masking, distancing, avoiding large gatherings, vaccinations – and less likely to seek COVID-19 information. This occurs because:
  - The perceived threat of the virus may decrease as people get used to its existence. For some people, the perceived costs of the response may start to outweigh the perceived risks related to the virus.
  - Urge for self-determination and freedom grows as restrictions continue for a long time and/or impose inconveniences in everyday life.
  - Complacency as people get used to the pandemic and the threat it poses.

