

Celebrate Holidays Safely + COVID-19 Vaccine Information



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COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) NC UPDATE

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Today, North Carolina marked another [record high](#) of reported COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. With the rising [COVID-19 trends](#), NCDHHS strongly recommends avoiding holiday travel and limiting contact with people who do not live in your household.

If you do plan to get together with people you don't live with:

- Get tested 1-3 days before you travel. Get tested 3-5 days after travel AND stay home for 7 days after travel. [Find a testing site](#) near you, including no-cost locations.
- Keep the gathering outside.

- Wear a mask at all times unless eating and drinking. Make sure you're 6 feet away from others if eating or drinking.

Remember that the [3 Ws](#) (wearing a mask, waiting 6 feet apart and washing your hands often) are still the best tools to protect our loved ones and ensure our hospitals have the capacity for those who need them.

For detailed holiday guidance, please see the [Winter Holidays Guidance Flyer](#).

Governor Cooper, Secretary Cohen Visit Health Care Workers Receiving COVID-19 Vaccine



Photo: Travis Long, News & Observer

Governor Cooper and Secretary Cohen [witnessed](#) some of the first COVID-19 vaccinations in the country at UNC Medical Center in Chapel Hill. UNC Health has begun administering the first doses of the Pfizer vaccine to health care workers who interact with COVID-19 patients.

UNC Health is one of 11 hospitals that received Pfizer vaccine shipments this week. Forty-two additional NC hospitals are expected to receive shipments today.

Health care workers who interact with COVID-19 patients are the first group of North Carolinians to receive vaccines, followed by residents and staff of long-term care facilities. Learn more about North Carolina's vaccine distribution process

at covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines.

COVID-19 Vaccination: You Have a Spot, Take Your Shot



Secretary Cohen shares that tested, safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines will soon be available to all North Carolinians, starting with those most vulnerable to the virus.



If you haven't already, download the SlowCOVIDNC app. More than 558,000 people have downloaded [SlowCOVIDNC](#), the official exposure notification app of North Carolina. SlowCOVIDNC alerts users when they may have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. The more people who download and use SlowCOVIDNC, the more we can slow the spread.

The app is completely anonymous and does not collect, store or share personal information or location data. Download for free on the [Apple App Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#). Learn more about the SlowCOVIDNC app in these [frequently asked questions](#), and share [updated resources and materials](#) about the app.

[Handling COVID-19 Outbreaks at Long-Term Care Facilities](#)



The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected long-term care facilities, both workers and residents. Outbreaks at these facilities have caused added strain as staff grapple with caring for themselves and their residents safely.

The White Oak long-term care facility in Burlington experienced a COVID-19 outbreak in early April, which led to dozens of staff members and residents contracting the virus. Over the course of a few months, White Oak worked with their local health department, the Durham VA Healthcare System and NCDHHS to overcome the outbreak. Watch the video to hear what they learned from the experience.

[Get Your Flu Vaccine](#)



Protect yourself and those around you during flu season and get your flu vaccine. COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations continue to rise in North Carolina, so it's more important than ever to get your flu shot to reduce hospitalizations and prevent co-infections of both COVID-19 and flu.

The CDC recommends flu vaccination every year for everyone 6 months and older. Vaccination is the best way to prevent infection with the flu. The flu vaccine is available in nearly every pharmacy, doctor's office, and even curbside. Plus, you can often get it at little to no cost.

On Dec. 11, NCDHHS recognized [Flu Vaccination Week](#) by encouraging people to get their flu shot because it's never too late to protect yourself and your family against the flu. Don't wait. Get your flu vaccine. Got it? Good. Learn more at flu.nc.gov. To find a flu vaccine near you, visit VaccineFinder.org.

Other COVID-19 News

- In a recent [op-ed](#), Governor Cooper explains that while hope is on the horizon with vaccines on the way, now is the time to dig deep to stay protected from the virus by wearing our masks, staying socially distant and keeping gatherings outdoors, or online.
- More than [300 no-cost](#), walk-up or drive-through COVID-19 testing events [will be offered](#) during the next two weeks to help slow the spread of COVID-19 during the holidays.
- NCDHHS has [selected](#) 17 school districts and 11 charter schools to participate in a pilot program to deploy COVID-19 rapid testing in K-12 public schools where any in-person instruction is happening
- Last week, Governor Roy Cooper, NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen and NC

Department of Public Safety Secretary Erik Hooks wrote a [letter](#) to local elected officials [imploing](#) them to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in their communities by considering additional enforcement measures..

[COVID-19 Testing](#)

Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or thinks they have been exposed to the virus should get [tested](#). If you are sick, use the [Check My Symptoms](#) tool to help you determine if you need a COVID-19 test.

North Carolina has upcoming no-cost community testing events scheduled throughout the state and [more being added due to the upcoming holidays](#). For an up-to-date list of events, visit the [No-Cost Testing Events](#) webpage. For more details about a specific event, call ahead before you go for a test.

COVID-19 testing is also provided at some local health departments, doctor and clinician offices, hospitals and clinics, many pharmacy sites and retail outlets, and other community locations. You can find testing sites by using the [Find My Testing Place](#) tool online.

[Get the Latest Information](#)

- Visit the [NCDHHS COVID-19 Response website](#) for information, a [data dashboard](#), [updates](#), [live briefings](#) and more.
- Go to [North Carolina's COVID-19 Information Hub](#) for resources, information and assistance across state government, including the latest [news releases](#).
- Follow NCDHHS on [social media](#) for advance notice of press briefings and a recap.



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