Stay Safe as COVID Metrics Rise + COVID-19 Vaccine Information

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Keep Your Guard Up as COVID Metrics Remain High

On Jan. 9, COVID-19 cases reached a new record high with 11,581 reported. This is the most dangerous period in the pandemic thus far. With COVID-19 positive cases and hospitalizations remaining high, please remember to:

- **Wear a mask at all times and maintain physical distance** (at least 6 feet) from people when you leave your home.
- **Stay home. Only go out for essential activities** like work, school, health care, or caring for family, or buying food.
- **Avoid gathering with people who you do not live with.** If you cannot avoid being

with other people, stay outside and keep it very small. Do not do things where you need to take off your mask, like eating or drinking.

- **If you were with people that you do not live with**, you should assume you may have become infected and get tested.

COVID-19 Vaccination Expanded to Those 65 and Older

Vaccine providers who are ready may now expand to vaccinating anyone 65 years and older. Former Governor Jim Hunt recently participated in our new public service announcement urging older North Carolinians to take their shot against COVID-19.

Our goal is to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible given the limited supply of vaccines. North Carolina moves through vaccination groups by aligning to federal priorities while empowering local vaccine providers with the flexibility to move to the next priority group as they complete groups based on their available supply.

Those 65 and older must make an appointment with their local health department or hospital to receive their shot. You can find a searchable list of participating health departments and hospitals at YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov. Please note that there is a wait time in many areas due to limited supplies. But hang in there, because everyone has a spot to take their shot—for free.

Also note that all health care workers are also eligible for vaccination, and should contact their local health department or hospital for an appointment.

To support communities, NCDHHS is partnering with health systems, local health

departments and community health centers across the state to host large community vaccine events for people currently eligible to be vaccinated.

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. 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.

Deputy Secretary Discusses COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-out

NCDHHS Deputy Secretary for Health Services Ben Money talks about how DHHS is rolling out the COVID-19 vaccine and ways the department will ensure an equitable process as more vaccine becomes available.

Download the SlowCOVIDNC App to Slow the Spread

SlowCOVIDNC

Our COVID-19 metrics are at record highs and we need your help to slow the spread. In addition to practicing the 3 Ws - Wearing a mask, waiting 6 feet part, and washing your hands often - you can download SlowCOVIDNC.

More than 641,000 people have already 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 the app, the more we can slow the spread of the virus.

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.

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 be high, so it's important 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.

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.

Get the Latest Information

- Visit the NCDHHS COVID-19 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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