

Masks to Become Optional in State Agencies on March 7 + Key COVID-19 Vaccine Information Now Available in 5 Additional Languages



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COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) NC UPDATE

March 4, 2022

Masks to Become Optional in State Agencies on March 7



Based on improving [COVID-19 metrics](#), masks will [become optional](#) in most state agencies and facilities beginning March 7. This coincides with updates to guidance from state health officials based on the emerging science and evidence to best protect North Carolinians.

The Office of State Human Resources has updated policies for face coverings for state government agencies that are part of the Governor's cabinet. Agency heads may require face coverings in settings that they determine to be high-risk, including long term care facilities, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and health care facilities, and federal regulations continue to require masks in certain facilities.

State employees who are not vaccinated are still required be tested for COVID-19 at least once a week.

Last week, Secretary Kody H. Kinsley and other members of NCDHHS leadership discussed the recent changes in masking and other guidance that will be implemented March 7, vaccine and testing information. Sign in to watch the recording [here](#).

Key COVID-19 Vaccine Information Now Available in Five Additional Languages

To ensure more North Carolinians have access to the information they need to make decisions about their health and wellbeing, NCDHHS has [made key COVID-19 vaccine information available](#) in the state's most used languages.

Information outlining the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines and boosters, the right to receive a free COVID-19 vaccine, and the importance of vaccination for kids and teens was translated into Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Russian and Vietnamese and is available for download in the [COVID-19 Communications Toolkit](#).

NCDHHS has a dedicated Spanish webpage for COVID-19 vaccines, vacunate.nc.gov, as well as materials and videos in English and Spanish. You can use the [COVID-19 Communications Toolkit](#) to share accurate information about COVID-19 with your community.

Reasons Why You Need a COVID-19 Booster



Boosters help to strengthen and extend your protection against COVID-19. After a while, the protection you have against COVID-19 starts to decrease. Boosters help your body mount more of a response in your immune system. Don't wait to vaccinate and don't wait to [get your booster](#) when it's time!

COVID-19 Testing

You should get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible if you have symptoms, and after five days if you are exposed to someone with COVID-19. Seek medical attention immediately for serious symptoms such as trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, or bluish lips or face.

- NC Medicaid beneficiaries can [receive free at-home COVID-19 tests](#) from their local pharmacies. Beneficiaries should select an at-home test at their preferred pharmacy and present their NC Medicaid ID card to the pharmacy for no out-of-pocket cost. The pharmacist will be able to bill Medicaid on the patient's behalf.
- Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order four, free at-home COVID-19 tests. Order your tests now so you have them when you need them at [covidtests.gov](#).
- To find a PCR testing sites near you, visit [ncdhhs.gov/GetTested](#). With increased demand for testing, try a different community-based site if your normal one is busy.
- For an up-to-date list of no-cost community testing events, visit the [No-Cost Testing Events](#) webpage.

Get the Latest Information

- Visit the [NCDHHS COVID-19 website](#) for information, a [data dashboard](#), [updates](#),

[live briefings](#), the [latest guidance](#) and more.

- Go to [North Carolina's COVID-19 Information Hub](#) for resources, information and assistance across state government, including the latest [news releases](#).
- Check out [YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov](#) to learn more about [finding your spot](#) to get your shot, [videos](#) about the COVID-19 vaccine, and other resources.
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Roy Cooper, Governor | Kody H. Kinsley, Secretary

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