

GOVERNMENT

## Regions, businesses reconsider COVID-19 prevention measures amid delta variant

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*Experts are still strongly suggesting getting the COVID-19 vaccination amid concerns about the delta variant. Image credit: U.S. Center for Disease Control*

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

With the new delta variant of COVID-19 contributing to climbing case counts in areas with lower rates of vaccinations, some governments are putting in place new restrictions to safeguard the health of both residents and recovering economies.

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According to the World Health Organization, COVID-19 vaccines are effective against disparate strains of the virus, including the delta variant. Governments, businesses and consumers are reevaluating and pondering closures in the wake of these developments, with experts highlighting the importance of vaccination access.

### Delta variant

In May, the CDC had announced that fully vaccinated people in the U.S. no longer need to use masks or socially distance in most indoor or outdoor settings. This announcement followed weeks of rising vaccination rates, falling COVID-19 infections and promising data on the efficacy of the vaccines.

U.S. businesses and states have moved to adopt this new guidance, including increasing or removing indoor capacity limits and other major steps towards fully reopening ([see story](#)). However, the new delta variant puts this progress at risk in many areas.

According to the [AP](#), the delta version of COVID-19 has been found in more than 80 countries since it was first identified in India. Viruses do constantly mutate, which is expected, but some experts worry that certain variants can evolve to be more contagious, make people sicker, or render vaccines not as effective.

In the United Kingdom, the delta variant is now responsible for 90 percent of all new infections, while in the United States, it represents 20 percent of infections, with experts anticipating that it could become the country's dominant variant.



*Some regions are recommending indoor mask usage in an attempt to slow the spread of the delta variant. Image credit: IBM*

The delta variant is about 60 percent more transmissible than the alpha variant.

It is unclear how well current COVID-19 vaccines protect against the delta variant. Per [NPR](#), if someone is fully vaccinated, two weeks after receiving their second dose, they have favorable odds of not getting a breakthrough COVID-19 infection, and even better odds of not getting a severe case of COVID-19 if they do somehow become infected.

One [study](#) of the delta variant in Scotland from the University of Edinburgh found that while the variant was associated with doubling the risk of hospitalization of those affected in the region, the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines offered a 79 percent and 60 percent rate of protection, respectively, against infection two weeks after the second dose.

New measures are being put in place across the globe in an effort to stopping the spread of the more contagious spread.

In response to the delta variant, Los Angeles County health officials are recommending that all people, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks indoors in public places, including retail stores.

Similarly in Washington State, everyone, regardless of vaccinations, must wear masks in places like schools, hospitals and public transit, as well as places of business that choose to implement mask-wearing policies.

In Australia, where only 5 percent of the population is vaccinated against COVID-19, more than 12 million people are under stay-at-home orders, according to the [BBC](#). Meanwhile, Hong Kong has [banned all passenger flights from the U.K.](#), deeming the country high-risk as the delta variant becomes more widespread in Great Britain.

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