





NH Public Health Recommendations for People Who Are Fully Vaccinated When Around Others From Outside the Household

May 17, 2021

On May 13, 2021, CDC released updated [Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#). The NH Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) continues to recommend that businesses and organizations implement the mitigation measures outlined in the NH [Universal Best Practices](#), including face mask use and social/physical distancing for all persons (irrespective of vaccination status) as a pandemic control measure, to protect vulnerable individuals who may not be able to be vaccinated or who might only have partial immunity from vaccination, and to protect business operations from introduction and spread of COVID-19. In settings highlighted in the chart below where small groups of fully vaccinated people are gathering, then strict social distancing and face mask use may not be necessary.

Additionally, NH DPHS (similar to CDC), continues to recommend that everybody wear face masks and physically distance in certain settings, including on public transportation, schools, healthcare settings like hospitals and long-term care facilities, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and other settings that may be high-risk for spread of COVID-19 or where a high proportion of people may not be fully vaccinated.

TABLE: NH recommendations for physical distancing and face mask use for fully vaccinated people in settings where there is potential for close contact with others.

Should I Wear a Face Mask & Physically Distance in Settings Around Other People?		Other Peoples' Vaccination Status	
		All fully vaccinated	Vaccination status unknown or not all are fully vaccinated
Location	Indoors	NO* 	YES 
	Outdoors	NO* 	NO* 

*Unless required to by a business or organization, or a person desires maximal protection

Note: Please note that if you are significantly immune compromised, then the recommendations above may not apply to you; please discuss your risk and protective measures with a trusted healthcare provider.

People who are unvaccinated or only partially vaccinated against COVID-19 should continue to wear face masks and physically distance when around other people indoors, and outdoors if unable to consistently maintain 6 feet of physical separation from others.

Rationale: A fully vaccinated person is at low risk for acquiring infection and spreading to others. However, because vaccines are not 100% effective and there is still a large number of unvaccinated people, mitigation measures like physical distancing and masking still have an important role to control this pandemic. Compared with vaccination alone, [modeling studies](#) from the CDC and academic partners have shown that a combination of high vaccination rates with continued use of population-level mitigation measures (face mask use, physical distancing, etc.) will be more effective at limiting COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths, and decrease community transmission more quickly. NH and most other states around the country continue to have a “substantial” [level of community transmission](#) of COVID-19, and a large proportion of the NH population is not yet fully vaccinated. Therefore, the next several weeks are an important time of transition to drive COVID-19 numbers lower. While we know that vaccination is highly effective at preventing COVID-19 (both asymptomatic and symptomatic disease) and limiting transmission to others, [population-level](#) mitigation measures will end the pandemic more quickly, protect the vulnerable and people unable to be vaccinated, and enable return to more normal societal functioning. Additionally, current CDC guidance is difficult for businesses and organizations to implement without developing a process to identify which people are fully vaccinated vs. not fully vaccinated. All of these considerations factored into our updated and clarified NH guidance outlined above.

NH DPHS will closely monitor COVID-19 infection rates and vaccination uptake, and will re-evaluate face mask use recommendations in the next 3-4 weeks. As vaccination rates increase and community transmission decreases, NH DPHS expects to fully implement CDC guidance by the end of June. **Therefore, it is important for people who have not yet scheduled themselves to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to do so now as we transition from relying on community mitigation measures to vaccination to control and end this pandemic.**

Other benefits and recommendations for people fully vaccinated outlined in the CDC guidance are consistent with current NH recommendations, including recommendations that fully vaccinated people:

- Do not need to quarantine after international travel (no persons, vaccinated or unvaccinated, are required to quarantine after domestic travel)
- Do not need to quarantine after a known exposure to another person with COVID-19
- Can be exempted from asymptomatic screening testing programs
- Can be exempted from testing after a known exposure, or after domestic travel (if they remain asymptomatic)

Fully vaccinated persons still should:

- Self-isolate and be evaluated for testing if experiencing any new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19
- Be tested 3-5 days after international travel