



## **The Delta variant of COVID-19: Protect yourself, protect your community**

The Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus can spread easily and quickly to anyone, even if you are fully vaccinated. Delta is more contagious and is associated with more severe illness than the original version of COVID-19. Individuals with chronic health conditions or go to places that are overcrowded or with poor ventilation are at higher risk of becoming sick from COVID-19.

### **The COVID-19 vaccine can save lives!**

Vaccination is still one of the most effective ways to protect our communities, families, and ourselves against COVID-19. If you have been fully vaccinated and catch the Delta variant of COVID-19, you are less likely to have severe illness and outcomes.

### **Public health measures give added protection!**

It is important to continue basic public health measures, even if fully vaccinated, including:

- Wearing non-medical masks in crowded outdoor or public indoor settings when physical distancing of 2 metres cannot be maintained or in poorly ventilated indoor spaces
- Wearing a medical mask indoors in overcrowded and poorly ventilated dwellings when a person with COVID-19 is co-habiting, particularly in the context of the Delta variant
- Cleaning hands frequently,
- Avoiding crowded indoor spaces,
- Self-isolating following a positive COVID-19 test, being a close contact with someone who has a COVID-19 infection, or if a person has otherwise been directed to self-isolate by public health authorities,
- Staying home if sick.

### **Delta is more dangerous – wear a mask!**

- Based on many outbreaks and other worldwide evidence, the United States' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have recently advised all individuals to wear masks in indoor public settings in high risk circumstances, even if they had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.<sup>1,1</sup>
- This advice is especially important in communities with rising numbers of people with COVID-19 infections, and at large public gatherings with travellers from different geographic areas.
- If you are unable to wear a mask safely (e.g. an illness making it hard to put it on and take it off or very young children), talk to your health care provider

### **Why this is important for First Nations communities**

- Each province and territory has its own guidance for off-reserve public settings.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html#print>

- Because of the unique vulnerabilities of First Nations communities, it is prudent to follow the more cautious recommendations to help protect their communities from the Delta and other highly contagious Covid-19 variants
- Guidance and more information on medical masks can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment/medical-masks-respirators.html>
- Information on non-medical masks can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>