

CORONAVIRUS – COVID19

YKHC OFFICIAL ADVISORY — November 18, 2021

Community Advisory Update

The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta's vulnerability to COVID-19 is significantly higher than many places in the state due to transportation challenges, limited healthcare infrastructure, limited access to running water and sewer, and multi-generational housing.

While vaccination remains our strongest tool for protecting people from getting seriously ill or becoming hospitalized with COVID-19, YKHC recommends communities continue to implement protective measures that help to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

Based on recommendations from the State, CDC, availability of vaccines, and stakeholder feedback, YKHC has put the following framework together to help identify **when** to implement these mitigation activities. Regardless of a sub-region's particular risk level, YKHC urges all individuals to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and to continue practicing certain protective health recommendations at all times as identified below.

YKHC guidance for safe-in person learning at schools may differ from these recommendations based on variables specific to that setting. The most updated recommendations for schools are posted on YKHC's website at: <https://www.ykhc.org/covid-19/resources/>

Assessing community risk level of COVID-19 transmission: The CDC recommends using two measures to assess, or calculate, the risk of transmission in a particular area — (1) the total number of new cases and (2) the percentage of positive tests, both over a period of the past 7 days. YKHC's recommendations incorporate those measures, as well as additional factors based on feedback from stakeholders.

The following table is a tool that can be used to determine current sub-regional risk level. Sub-regions are defined by the five Sub-Regional Clinic Service areas. The remaining villages fall into the Bethel area.

| Indicator (As measured over the past 7 days) | | Low Transmission Blue | Moderate Transmission Yellow | Substantial Transmission Orange | High Transmission Red |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Number of positive cases | Aniak Sub-Region | 0 | 1 | 2 | ≥3 |
| | Bethel Sub-Region | 1 | 2-7 | 8-13 | ≥14 |
| | Emmonak Sub-Region | 0 | 1 | 2 | ≥3 |
| | Hooper Bay Sub-Region | 0 | 1 | 2 | ≥3 |
| | St. Mary's Sub-Region | 0 | 1 | 2 | ≥3 |
| | Toksook Bay Sub-Region | 0 | 1 | 2 | ≥3 |
| Percentage of positive tests | | <3% | 3.0-3.9% | 4.0%-4.9% | ≥5% |
| Percentage of eligible population that has been vaccinated | | ≥50% | 30%-50% | 10%-30% | <10% |
| Contact Tracing of Local Cases Linked to Travel: Each individual community should go two weeks without any cases that are not clearly linked to travel. This period reflects one full disease cycle, and helps ensure the virus has not spread in the community. | | | | | |

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Guidance for Both Vaccinated and Unvaccinated People

Whether or not certain activities can be performed safely depends on three factors: (1) if a person is vaccinated, (2) the transmission rate of COVID-19 in the community, and (3) the size and location of the gathering. Small gatherings are safer than large gatherings (typically comprised of greater than 10 people). Outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities.

If a community is experiencing high or substantial transmission, YKHC recommends the immediate implementation of strategies that reduce the spread of COVID-19, including but not limited to: universal masking, avoiding or rescheduling large gatherings, social distancing, and expanded testing.

Recommendations for UNVACCINATED People

Masks for Unvaccinated People

Regardless of transmission status in a community, unvaccinated people should wear masks in any public setting, unless outside with members of their own household.

Quarantine Due to Travel or Close Contact for Unvaccinated People

An unvaccinated person who has traveled or has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 within the last 10 days should quarantine. If an unvaccinated close contact is unable to separate from other household members, the entire household should quarantine. When quarantining following travel, only the traveler needs to quarantine.

YKHC recommends unvaccinated close contacts (and household members where necessary) complete a 10-day quarantine, testing immediately if symptomatic or tested on Day 5–7 after exposure if asymptomatic. Alternately, unvaccinated close contacts and household members may choose a seven-day quarantine, if they have a negative test result on Day 6 and Day 7 of quarantine. If looking to return to work with two negative tests, the earliest an unvaccinated person could return to work would be on Day 8. *If a person develops COVID-19 symptoms within 14 days of an exposure (regardless of whether or not they are in quarantine), they should immediately self-isolate and seek additional testing.*

Persons can also continue to quarantine for 14 days per existing CDC recommendations. The full 14-day quarantine period is also recommended for unvaccinated workers in a communal living and crowded work setting. Individuals should check with their employer for further guidance. Local communities may decide to continue a 14-day quarantine for residents. Local travel or quarantine restrictions must still be followed.

Social Circle for Unvaccinated People

Community transmission of COVID-19 is still occurring throughout the region, particularly among unvaccinated individuals. In-person contact and social circles should be kept as small as possible. In high transmission areas, this means keeping social circles to just those who live in the same household.

As an unvaccinated person considers expanding their circle, adding fully vaccinated individuals is the safest group to start with. Please remember that even in a low transmission area, people should be able to name everyone they have been around the last two weeks.

Recommendations for UNVACCINATED People, cont.

Outdoor Activities for Unvaccinated People

When in areas with substantial to high-risk transmission:

- Do not attend large, crowded outdoor gatherings or outdoor dining with friends from multiple households. Do not play sports with unvaccinated people.
- Unvaccinated individuals should wear masks when gatherings with anyone outside their household, including vaccinated individuals.

When in low to moderate-risk transmission areas:

- Wear a mask when attending large, crowded outdoor settings or if engaging in less safe activities, such as playing sports outdoors with unvaccinated people; gathering outdoors in large (more than 10 people) groups with other unvaccinated people or dining outdoors with friends from multiple households.
- Unvaccinated persons may, without a mask, exercise with family members and attending small (less than 10 people) private gatherings with other households if everyone from the other households is vaccinated.

Indoor Activities for Unvaccinated People

Indoor activities are generally higher risk. Consider not attending if you are high risk or live with persons who are unvaccinated.

When in areas with substantial to high-risk transmission:

- Unvaccinated individuals should not attend any indoor public gathering.
- Always wear a mask in all public indoor settings or when running essential errands, including at work, in a tribal office, in stores, and at post office.
- Masks are not necessary in small (less than 10 people), private gatherings with other households if everyone from the other households are vaccinated.

When in low to moderate-risk transmission areas:

- Unvaccinated individuals must wear a mask in public indoor settings or when running essential errands, including at work, in a tribal office, in stores, at the post office and religious services.
- Without a mask, attend small (less than 10 people), private gatherings with other households if everyone from the other households are vaccinated.

Recommendations for VACCINATED People

Masks for Vaccinated People

In any area with substantial or high transmission, YKHC recommends wearing a mask in any indoor public setting. Additionally, people who are close contact of a known or suspected COVID-19 case should wear a mask for 14 days from exposure, regardless of transmission rate or vaccination status.

Even in areas with low or moderate transmission, if vaccination status of others cannot be determined, the safest practice is for all individuals to follow all recommended infection prevention and control practices, including maintaining physical distance and wearing masks. Local governments and businesses should keep in mind their ability to determine vaccination status of customers or patrons when updating mask and physical distancing policies or ordinances.

All individuals should check with their local government, employer, business, or event organizers to see what current mask guidelines are.

Mask recommendations for vaccinated individuals are still in place for hospitals, schools, and public transportation regardless of background transmission rates.

Quarantine Due to Close Contact or Travel for Vaccinated People

YKHC does not recommend quarantine for vaccinated persons due to recent travel or exposure to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 provided they meet the following criteria:

1. They are fully vaccinated. Someone is considered “fully vaccinated” two weeks after getting the second shot of Pfizer or Moderna’s vaccine or one week after getting the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
2. Have remained asymptomatic since the exposure. In accordance with YKHC guidance, targeted testing will still be performed for any exposed, vaccinated individual if they are symptomatic.
3. They do not have ongoing exposure. If a household member cannot isolate and exposure remains ongoing, YKHC recommends the vaccinated household member remain in isolation with the index patient. Testing strategy is described above.

For fully vaccinated household members with ongoing exposure to an individual with COVID-19, YKHC recommends the individual quarantine for the same length of time the index patient is in isolation. COVID-19 testing should occur on Day 1, followed by repeat testing on Day 5–7 and the end of quarantine. Symptom monitoring should also be performed for a full 14 days, following the last day of possible exposure.

Vaccinated close contacts, who are not household members of the individual who tested positive for COVID-19, are not required to quarantine but should test on Day 5–7.

Anyone who develops symptoms within 14 days of an exposure (regardless of vaccination status) should immediately self-isolate and seek testing. Local communities may decide to continue a 14-day quarantine for residents. Local travel or quarantine restrictions must still be followed. All persons should check with their local government and employer for further guidance.

Testing for Vaccinated People

All vaccinated people should test if they have symptoms of COVID-19, or are a close contact of a known or suspected case of COVID-19. Local communities and businesses may have additional testing requirements. All persons should check with their local government and employer for further guidance.

Have questions? If you would like additional guidance for yourself or your community, please reach out to YKHC.