

More Americans seek vaccination amid summer infection surge

July 26 2021, by Philip Marcelo



Carlos Arrendondo arrives for his appointment to get vaccinated, as banners advertise the availability of the Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines at a county-run vaccination site at the Eugene A. Obregon Park in Los Angeles Thursday, July 22, 2021. The number of Americans getting a COVID-19 vaccine has been rising in recent days as virus cases once again surge and officials raise dire warnings about the consequences of remaining unvaccinated. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes, File

Infections are climbing across the U.S., and mask mandates and other COVID-19 prevention measures are making a comeback in some places as health officials issue increasingly dire warnings about the highly contagious delta variant.

But in a possible sign that the warnings are getting through to more Americans, [vaccination rates](#) are creeping up again, offering hope that the nation could yet break free of the coronavirus if people who have been reluctant to receive the shot are finally inoculated.

Vaccinations ticked up over the weekend, with about 657,000 vaccines administered Saturday and nearly 780,000 on Sunday, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The 7-day rolling average on Sunday was about 583,000 vaccinations a day, up from about 525,000 a week prior.

The country will need much higher levels of immunity to crush the resurgent virus—probably 85% to 90%, said Dr. Ashish Jha, dean of Brown University's School of Public Health. The current level stands at about 67%, counting prior infections.

"So we need a lot more vaccinations. Or a lot more infections" and thus more suffering, he said.

Nearly 57% of the country has received at least one vaccine dose, and about 49% of Americans are fully inoculated. The virus has killed almost 611,000 people in the U.S. since the pandemic started.



A health care worker fills a syringe with the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, Thursday, July 22, 2021, at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. The number of Americans getting a COVID-19 vaccine has been rising in recent days as virus cases once again surge and officials raise dire warnings about the consequences of remaining unvaccinated. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer, File

Meanwhile, some municipal officials are re-imposing some virus rules meant to slow the spread of the disease.

St. Louis on Monday became the second major city to mandate that [face masks](#) be worn indoors, regardless of vaccination status, joining Los Angeles in [re-imposing the orders](#).

In New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio [announced Monday](#) that all municipal workers—including teachers and police officers—will be required to get vaccinated by mid-September or face weekly COVID-19 testing, making the city one of the largest employers in the U.S. to take such action.

The nation's top infectious diseases expert said federal officials are [considering](#) a nationwide recommendation to resume wearing face masks as the once-rosy outlook for a summer return to normalcy seemed to be at risk.

"We're going in the wrong direction," Dr. Anthony Fauci, who serves as President Joe Biden's chief medical adviser, told CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday. "It is really a pandemic among the unvaccinated, which is the reason why we're out there, practically pleading with the [unvaccinated people](#) to go out and get vaccinated."



A health care worker inoculates Evelyn Pereira, right, of Brooklyn, with the first dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine as her daughter Soile Reyes, 12, looks on, Thursday, July 22, 2021, at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. The number of Americans getting a COVID-19 vaccine has been rising in recent days as virus cases once again surge and officials raise dire warnings about the consequences of remaining. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer, File

Jha shared in Fauci's frustration.

"For much of winter, spring, I was VERY optimistic we'd have a great summer with few infections, deaths," he wrote on Twitter. "But (the) situation has clearly turned worse."

He said the nation "hit a wall" in its vaccination effort, with just under

50% of the population fully immunized, and the virus' delta variant proving be more contagious than expected.

"Super contagious variant, lots of unvaccinated folks and more breakthrough infections sets up a tough few months ahead," Jha said. "We need to break the cycle."

The seven-day rolling average for daily new cases in the country shot up over the past two weeks, from more than 19,000 on July 11 to nearly 52,000 on July 25, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

Also, some prominent conservative and Republican voices that have spent months casting doubt on the vaccination effort have recently started sounding a different tune.



A sign advises shoppers to wear masks outside of a store Monday, July 19, 2021, in the Fairfax district of Los Angeles. Infections are climbing across the U.S. and mask mandates and other COVID-19 prevention measures are making a comeback in some places as health officials issue increasingly dire warnings about the highly contagious delta variant. But in a possible sign that the warnings are getting through to more Americans, vaccination rates are creeping up again, offering hope that the nation could yet break free of the coronavirus if people who have been reluctant to receive the shot are finally inoculated. Credit: AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez, File



In this Wednesday, March 24, 2021, file photo, Pre-K students arrive for the school day at Phyl's Academy, in the Brooklyn borough of New York. New York City will require all of its municipal workers—including teachers and police officers—to get coronavirus vaccines by mid-September or face weekly

COVID-19 testing, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Monday, July 26, 2021.
Credit: AP Photo/Mark Lennihan, Pool, File



In this Oct. 29, 2020, file photo, English language arts teacher Frank Esposito submits to a COVID-19 nasal swab test at West Brooklyn Community High School in New York. New York City will require all of its municipal workers—including teachers and police officers—to get coronavirus vaccines by mid-September or face weekly COVID-19 testing, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Monday, July 26, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Kathy Willens, File

House Minority Whip Steve Scalise, a Louisiana Republican, was among the members of the GOP Doctors Caucus who held a press conference at

the Capitol late last week imploring their constituents to lay lingering doubts aside.

A week ago, on July 19, Fox News host Sean Hannity declared: "It absolutely makes sense for many Americans to get vaccinated. I believe in science. I believe in the science of vaccinations."

And in Tennessee, the brother of a popular local conservative radio host who had been a [vaccine](#) skeptic urged listeners to get vaccinated as his brother was in critical care in the hospital battling COVID-19.

"For those listening, I know if he were able to tell you this, he would tell you, 'Go get vaccinated. Quit worrying about the politics. Quit worrying about all the conspiracy theories,'" Mark Valentine said of his brother, Phil Valentine, Thursday on WWTN-FM in Nashville.

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