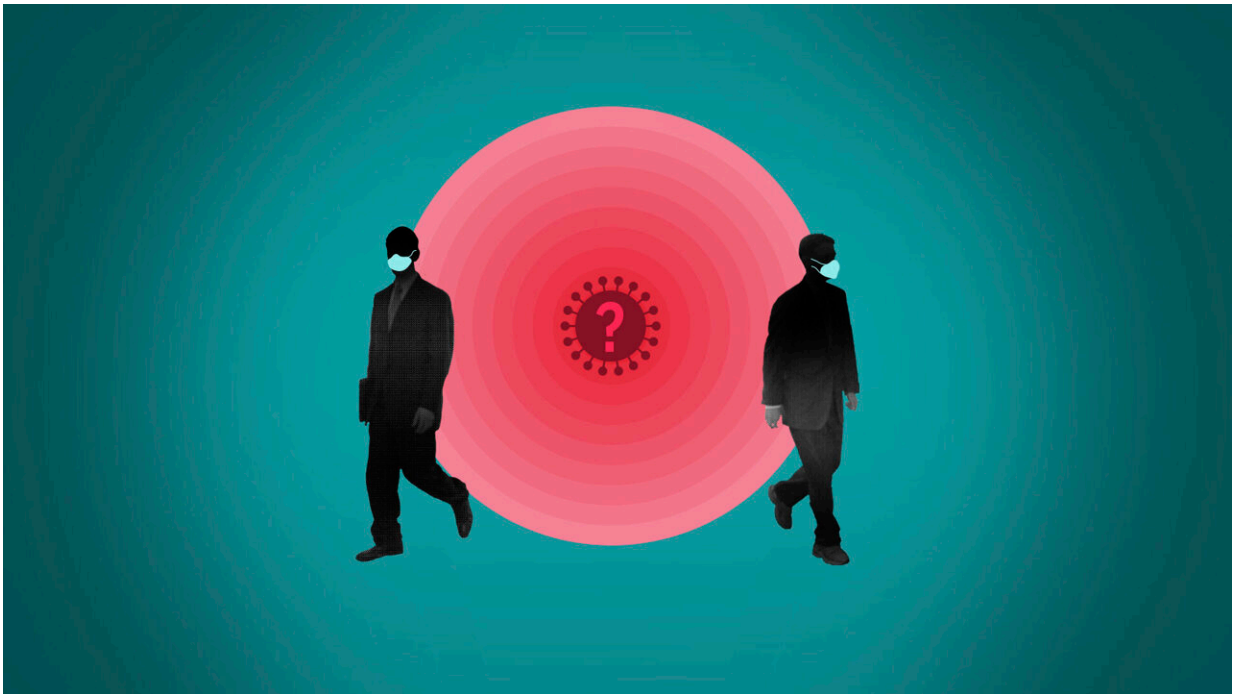


Should vaccinated people mask up with COVID-19 cases rising?

July 23 2021, by Carla K. Johnson



Should vaccinated people mask up with COVID-19 cases rising? Credit: AP Illustration/Peter Hamlin

Should vaccinated people mask up with COVID-19 cases rising?

It depends on your situation, but masking in public can provide another layer of protection and help prevent the virus from spreading to others who aren't protected.

An easing of [safety precautions](#) and the large number of people who remain unvaccinated in many regions are contributing to the spread of cases around the world.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has not changed its advice that fully vaccinated people can safely go without [masks](#) in most situations. But Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the agency's director, said local decisions on mask mandates could vary depending on [vaccination levels](#) and whether there's a surge.

Los Angeles County recently started requiring residents to wear masks indoors regardless of vaccination status, for example, and officials in New Orleans are urging people to do the same.

Though COVID-19 vaccines greatly reduce the chance of severe illness and death and remain effective against variants, some experts said wearing a mask is a reasonable precaution since it's still possible to get infected.

Masking could also help prevent the spread of the virus to children too young for vaccination and people with weak immune systems.

"Personally, I continue to wear a mask when going into [public spaces](#) outside of my household, both for my own protection and for the sake of my community," said virus researcher Angela Rasmussen of the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization at the University of Saskatchewan.

Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease expert at Vanderbilt University, said a "belt-and-suspenders" approach also makes sense for people who are older or have [health issues](#) and are more vulnerable to getting severely ill if infected.

"I'm pretty healthy, but I do have gray hair. So when I go out to the

supermarket, I'm masked," Schaffner said.

More information: [What is a COVID-19 vaccine 'breakthrough' case?](#)

[What should I know about the delta variant?](#)

[Do I need to get tested for COVID-19 if I'm vaccinated?](#)

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Citation: Should vaccinated people mask up with COVID-19 cases rising? (2021, July 23)
retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-07-vaccinated-people-mask-covid-cases.html>

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