

# NYC begins requiring proof of vaccination at eateries, gyms

August 17 2021, by Bobby Caina Calvan

---



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Notices taped to the windows and front door of the Stop Inn, a diner in Queens, made it clear the eatery would comply with the city's new edict against the coronavirus: All patrons dining indoors at restaurants,

browsing works of art at museums or sweating it out at gyms must prove they have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

The signs at the Stop Inn went up Monday evening, said a server, to give customers due notice that on Tuesday it would begin complying with the city's latest effort to curtail the spread of the virus, particularly the troublesome and more contagious delta variant that has fueled a surge in infections and hospitalizations across the country.

Norbu Lama, 17, said he was surprised when a server politely asked for his vaccination card soon after he slid into a booth with his parents and younger sister.

"We didn't know we had to bring it," he said. The server appeared relieved when Lama and his family presented copies of their vaccination cards on their phone.

The vaccination mandate, first announced two weeks ago by New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, is meant to persuade more people to get vaccinated—or miss out on partaking of much of the city's amenities, including restaurants, bars, gyms, public performances, museums and other cultural venues.

Since then, more than 301,000 more people have gotten at least one shot of a vaccine, according to city data. To date, at least 5.2 million of the city's 8.8 million residents have gotten at least one shot, with nearly 5 million fully vaccinated.

"We do not want to go back to restrictions," de Blasio said during a virtual news conference Tuesday. "The key to our progress is vaccination."

While the new rules went into effect Tuesday, enforcement won't begin

until Sept. 13.

As the delta variant poses a growing threat, some cities and states, as well as the federal government, have moved from encouraging vaccinations to requiring people to show proof they have been inoculated from the disease or face consequences such as being required to undergo regular testing or lose access to key elements of public life.

Since New York City announced its move, San Francisco and New Orleans have followed suit. Los Angeles is also considering similar measures. All are led by Democratic mayors, underscoring the political divide over mandates on vaccines, masks and other measures.

New York City's mandate applies to patrons, employees, New Yorkers, commuters and visitors alike in settings ranging from indoor arenas to coffee shops and yoga studios. Even strip clubs are included.

New York City averaged 2,000 new cases of the coronavirus a day over the past seven days, up from around 200 a day in late June.

Michael Lanza, a spokesperson for the city's health department, said a \$10 million media campaign would also be launching Tuesday as part of the city's visitor outreach, including ads on radio, television, subways and social media.

The mayor announced that about 100 vaccination sites will pop up at such places as gyms and the city would send out more than 600 canvassers to help in public outreach.

Andrew Rigie, executive director of the NYC Hospitality Alliance, said his group was fully behind the effort but acknowledged challenges.

"The City's outreach needs to target education and training for

establishments to implement these policies, as they pose operational and economic challenges for understaffed restaurants, bars, and nightclubs struggling to recover," he said in a statement.

In return for the industry's cooperation, Rigie called on the city and other levels of government to replenish financial aid to restaurants still struggling to recover.

A stroll through some New York City eateries on the eve of the new rules showed some restaurant staff were unaware they would soon be required to ask patrons to show proof of vaccination or be turned away.

But others were fully aware and still wondering how they would comply.

Restaurateurs like Leon Ellis, the owner of Chocolate, a restaurant in the city's Harlem neighborhood, said the sacrifices need to be made to keep the virus from wreaking more havoc on businesses like his.

"This COVID is a big deal. So we need to do everything that we can to make sure that we get it in check," he said. "Whatever needs to be done to control this this spread, especially with this new variant. So I'm willing to do whatever it takes to make it happen."

He says he is optimistic that customers will keep coming. "I'm thinking positively. I think most people in New York are responsible," noting that New Yorkers know all too well the disruptions the pandemic has already wrought on their day-to-day lives. "New York went through the worst of COVID, and because of the guidelines that were put in place, we're able to damp it down and control it."

Ellis knows there are details he and his staff still need to work out to fully comply with the new rules, but he also knows enforcement won't begin for several more weeks.

"September is when actually mandated to start, so I still have to do my research on it. But whatever the guidelines are, we will comply," Ellis said.

© 2021 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: NYC begins requiring proof of vaccination at eateries, gyms (2021, August 17)  
retrieved 24 April 2024 from  
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-08-nyc-requiring-proof-vaccination-eateries.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.