

New COVID cases were 300% higher this Labor Day weekend than last year

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(HealthDay)—With the Delta variant surging and many Americans

mask- and vaccine-free, new cases of COVID-19 spiked to levels over the long Labor Day weekend that were 300% higher than those seen over the same weekend in 2020, according to a new tally from Johns Hopkins University.

That means packed hospitals and rising numbers of infected children as a new school year begins, according to [CNN](#).

"The takeaway for everyone is get your shots and certainly wear a mask for that added layer of protection if you're in public indoor spaces right now," Dr. Megan Ranney, professor of emergency medicine and associate dean of public health at Brown University, in Providence, R.I., told the news agency.

The surge in new cases could really hit a high point in about two weeks from now: Last year at this time, cases surged in 31 states, and the number of people testing positive for infection with then new coronavirus also spiked in 25 states, *CNN* said.

And last year, Americans didn't have the highly transmissible Delta variant to contend with. It's part of the reason that CDC director Dr. Rochelle Walensky last week urged people to curb their travel over the Labor Day holiday. She also again pushed for vaccination: Right now only 62% of Americans who are eligible for a vaccine (everyone 12 years of age and older) are fully vaccinated.

It's the unvaccinated who are landing in hospitals and dying, experts say.

"Here's the important thing: everyone that I'm hospitalizing is not vaccinated," Ranney told *CNN*. "We are, by and large across the country, not needing to hospitalize people that have gotten both doses of the vaccine. This is a disease of the unvaccinated right now."

That's showing up as a key factor in states hit hardest by COVID-19. According to *CNN*, fewer than 40% of people living in Alabama, Wyoming, Idaho, Mississippi and West Virginia are vaccinated, and in two of those states, Alabama and Mississippi, hospital intensive care units (ICUs) are already at more than 90% of ICU beds taken.

Four other states—Georgia, Arkansas, Texas and Florida—also have less than 10% ICU capacity left, according to data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

More information: Find out more about the value and safety of immunization against COVID-19 at the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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