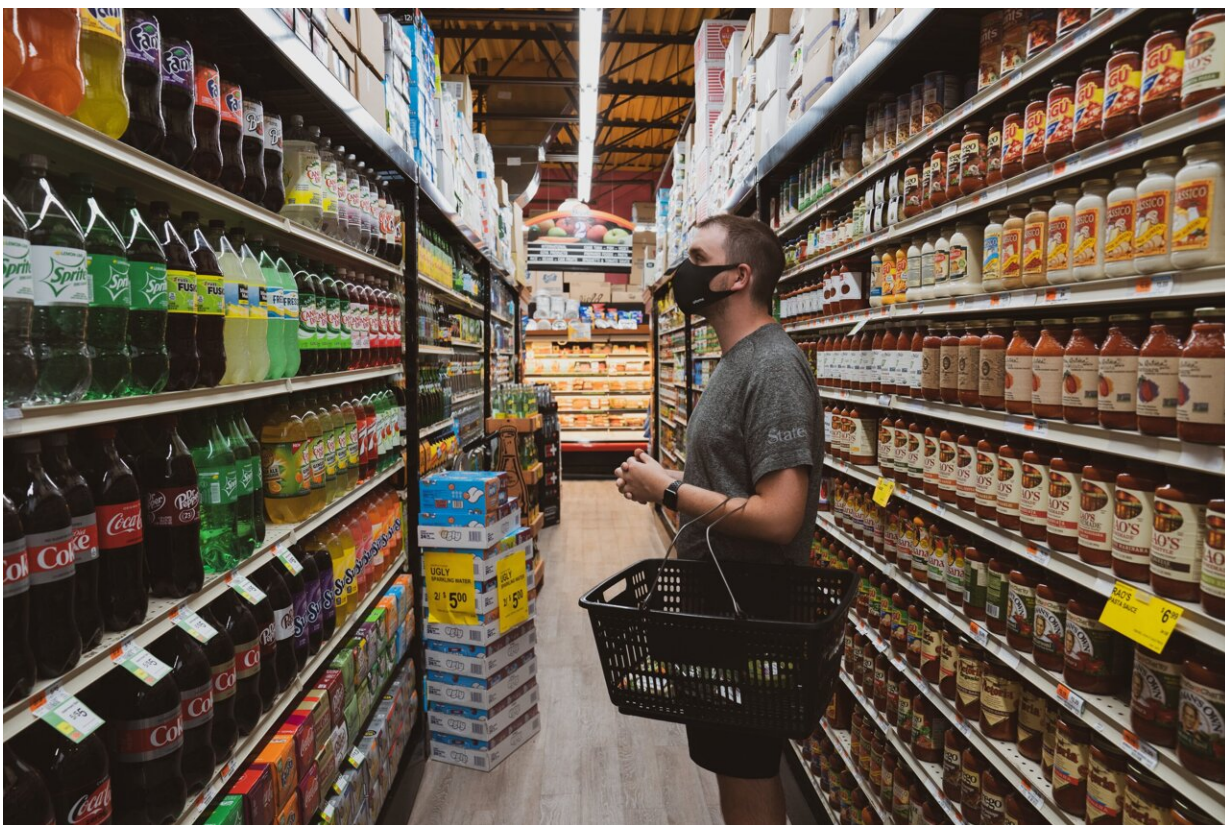


DC to drop most indoor mask requirements next week

November 16 2021, by Ashraf Khalil



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

The District of Columbia will lift its indoor mask requirement starting next week, as local COVID-19 infection cases continue to trend downward.

Starting Monday, Nov. 22, masks will no longer be required in many indoor spaces. A statement from the city Health Department announced that masks will still be required in certain settings, including schools, libraries, public transportation, ride-share vehicles and group-living facilities like nursing homes, dorms and jails. Private businesses will still be able to require customers to wear masks.

The nation's capital originally lifted its indoor mask requirement for fully vaccinated individuals in May, but reinstated it in late July as cases began to rise again. According to Health Department statistics, the current seven-day average of new cases—the department's preferred metric—is higher than it was in May when the first mask requirement was lifted, but still well below the late-summer delta-variant peak in August and September.

The greater Washington area still remains an area of "substantial" transmission, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Mayor Muriel Bowser has repeatedly described mask requirements as a sort of thermostat-style dial that can be turned up or down based on shifting conditions.

The stipulations do not apply to federal Washington, including the White House and Congress. Spokesman Kevin Munoz said the White House won't be dropping its indoor mask requirement.

"The White House follows CDC guidance which recommends masking in areas of high or substantial transmission," Munoz said.

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