

Record high COVID cases and deaths reported in Florida

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(HealthDay)—Coronavirus cases and deaths in Florida are at record highs as the Delta variant ravages the state and Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis holds firm on forbidding vaccine and mask mandates.

As of Tuesday, Florida had reported a record average of 227 COVID-19 deaths a day this week, and the [average number](#) of new known cases reached 23,314 a day on the weekend, 30% higher than the state's previous peak in January, a *New York Times* database shows.

Federal data show that COVID-19 hospitalizations in Florida nearly tripled in the past month. There are more than 17,200 people hospitalized with the virus statewide.

In response to surging hospitalizations, Orlando's mayor asked residents to conserve water to reduce the strain on the city's supply of [liquid oxygen](#), which is used both to purify drinking water and to treat COVID-19 patients, the *Times* reported.

Dozens of doctors and [hospital staff](#) in Palm Beach County held a press conference on Monday to urge unvaccinated people to get shots, the *Times* reported. They said hospitals are being overwhelmed and lives destroyed.

"We are exhausted," said Dr. Rupesh Dharia, an internal medicine specialist. "Our patience and resources are running low."

Dr. Chirag Patel, assistant chief medical officer of UF Health Jacksonville, said the patients hospitalized with the virus during this latest surge tend to be younger and had fewer other health issues, but were nearly all unvaccinated. Of those who have died, including patients ranging in age from their 20s to their 40s, more than 90 percent were not immunized, Patel told the *Times*.

"We've had more patients this [time](#) around that have passed away at a younger age with very few, if any, medical problems," he said. "They simply come in with COVID, and they don't make it out of the hospital."

Overall, 52% of people in Florida are fully vaccinated, but the rate is less than 30% in some of the hardest-hit counties, the *Times* reported.

Despite DeSantis' ban on mask mandates, several school districts have already implemented them.

More information: Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for more on [COVID-19](#).

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