NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES

Protecting Each Other from
COVID-19
(Effective March 7, 2022)

The COVID-19 landscape looks much different today than it did March 2020. We continue to learn more about the virus and have effective tools to reduce risk to people. As it has throughout the pandemic, NCDHHS adapts its response based on the emerging science and evidence to best protect North Carolinians and use the tools we have to get back to the people, experiences, and places we love.

Individuals should:

- Layer prevention strategies based on individual risk, community indicators of spread and severity, and risk of setting.

- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. This is particularly critical for those over age 65, those who are immunocompromised, those with underlying medical conditions, and healthcare workers. The Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines are the best choice for most people.

- Maintain improved **air flow** (opening windows, using air filters, turning on fans) throughout indoor spaces when possible.

- Get **tested** if you are exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19 and follow recommendations for isolation and quarantine. Wear a mask for 10 days following testing positive or symptom onset of a COVID-19 infection, unless a mask use exemption applies. Wear a mask for 10 days following an exposure to a person with COVID-19, unless a mask use exemption applies.

- If you are **immunocompromised,** high risk for severe disease, unvaccinated, or not up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccines:

  - Have a plan for rapid testing if needed (e.g., having home tests or access to testing).

  - Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you are a candidate for **treatments** if you have COVID-19 - like oral antiviral pills or monoclonal antibodies. Some people may benefit from preventive medication, like Evusheld. More information on treatment is available here.

  - Consider whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions (e.g., testing).

- If you live with someone at high risk for severe disease:
    - Consider screening testing yourself to detect infection early.
    - Consider wearing a mask when indoors with them.
- Follow any mask requirements that may be in place for settings like public transportation, health care, high risk congregate living (e.g., long term care settings, homeless shelters).
- Everyone age 2 and over can wear a mask for an added layer of protection.

Employers should:

- Require employees to report vaccination status.
    - Under state and federal law, employers may legally require employees to be vaccinated or require employees to disclose their COVID-19 vaccination status.
- Require employees who are not up-to-date with vaccination to participate in screening testing programs, especially in high-risk settings such as congregate living settings.
- Remind all employees, visitors, and patrons to self-monitor for symptoms and get tested if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Consider the need for universal mask requirements in high-risk settings such as health care and high density congregate settings, (e.g., correction and detention facilities, homeless shelters, migrant farm camps).
- Maintain improved air flow (opening windows, using air filters, turning on fans) throughout indoor spaces when possible.