

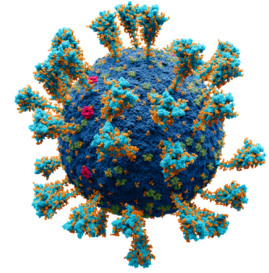


### What About the Delta Variant?

The evolving newer variant, Delta (or B.1.617.2), was identified in India in December 2020 and now is responsible for more than 83% of the COVID-19 cases seen in the United States and has spread to nearly 100 other countries around the world.

### Why Is This Dangerous?

Studies have shown that the Delta variant is 40-60% more transmissible than Alpha and almost twice as transmissible than the original strain of SARS-CoV-2. Data out of China also reports that the viral load in the Delta infections were approximately 1000 times higher than those with other variants.



Although the viral load is higher, it is uncertain if it correlates with increased severity. Ongoing studies are looking into how the Delta infection relates to symptoms, hospitalization and death.

### What About Case Numbers?

As we all have been hearing, infection cases are on the rise in the US, particularly in states where the vaccination rates are low. Currently in LA County, early August data indicates daily cases over 2000-4000 and a positivity rate of 5.8%.

### What If I Am Vaccinated?

Studies indicate the vaccine (when “fully vaccinated”) is effective at preventing hospitalization and death but the neutralization levels of the vaccinated are lower against the Delta variant when compared to the original.

There are cases of “Breakthrough Infections”, meaning infected with COVID-19 after being fully vaccinated. Ongoing studies are looking into this and companies are currently developing booster doses to improve the efficacy against ongoing variants.

### What Does It All Mean?

Local public health and CDC recommends masking indoors, regardless of vaccination status. People should also continue to follow guidelines to protect themselves from infection.

Only 51% of the US population is vaccinated, which allows for more evolving and emerging variants of SARS-CoV-2.

### References:

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*Image Source: Scientifically accurate atomic model of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).*

*Source: Alexey Solodovnikov (Idea, Producer, CG, Editor)*