

COVID-19 Breakthrough Infections: What Community Members Need to Know

With the new and highly contagious Delta variant spreading across Indian Country, some vaccinated people have experienced breakthrough infections. Breakthrough infections are when someone fully vaccinated against COVID-19 gets infected and tests positive for COVID-19. **These infections are uncommon.**

Below are answers to frequently asked questions about breakthrough infections.



What are the risks of “breakthrough” infections?

There is a small chance someone could still get COVID-19 after being vaccinated. There are no vaccines that perfectly prevent 100% of infections. COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe illness and death.

If a vaccinated person does get a COVID-19 infection, there is a very low risk of severe illness or death. Most people with breakthrough cases experience mild symptoms and can recover at home. The vast majority of those hospitalized with COVID-19 are people who have not been vaccinated.

What is the point of vaccinating if people can still get sick?

Vaccinations can protect against disease and are highly protective against death and hospitalization due to COVID-19.

Breakthrough infections are rare. Even if you do have a breakthrough infection after being fully vaccinated, you may have mild symptoms or no symptoms at all.

Vaccination also reduces the risk of COVID-19 infections in our communities. When more people are vaccinated, it lowers the risk for everyone.

Why did guidance change again about vaccinated people wearing masks?

There is still a large portion of our population that is unvaccinated and at high risk for serious COVID-19 illness. Unfortunately, vaccinated people can still spread this variant to others, and that is why they need to wear a mask in public spaces.

Wearing a mask in public spaces will also help prevent future variants and will protect everyone in our community, including our elders, those with weaker immune systems, and children who are unable to get the vaccine.

What can I do?

- Get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19, even if you are vaccinated
- Wear a mask in public spaces
- Meet up with friends and family outdoors
- Avoid crowded spaces, especially indoor spaces

Encourage your friends, neighbors, coworkers, and family who are over age 12 and haven't gotten their COVID-19 vaccines to get vaccinated as soon as possible to protect our communities.