

## Get Vaccinated to Protect Against COVID-19 Delta Variant and Future Threats

Public health officials are again sounding the alarm over an increase in U.S. COVID-19 infections linked to the Delta variant. This uptick is threatening to reverse the progress made as a result of previous mitigation efforts and widespread vaccination efforts.

Variants are different versions of the original virus that contain altered genetic material. Dominant variants typically provide better survival characteristics for the virus. COVID-19 variants are currently identified by Greek letters (e.g., Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, etc.) The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 83.2% of new COVID-19 cases are due to the Delta variant. Unfortunately, the longer the virus that causes COVID-19 is allowed to persist in the human population, the greater the likelihood that more troublesome variants will emerge and the pandemic will continue.

Thankfully, there is positive news. Available public health data indicates those who are fully vaccinated with any of the current CDC-approved COVID-19 vaccinations are highly unlikely to become seriously ill or die from current strains of virus that causes COVID-19. Studies continue on this issue. Fully vaccinated individuals can still become infected (referred to as a “breakthrough infection”); however, they are far less likely to experience serious adverse health effects or die due to COVID-19. For those who wish to see the data, consider one public health indicator – mortality. Specifically, the likelihood of dying due to COVID-19 in the general U.S. population verses the likelihood of dying from COVID-19 if you are a member of the fully vaccinated U.S. population:

COVID-19 Mortality (U.S. Population)	COVID-19 Mortality in Fully Vaccinated Individuals (U.S.)
<p><b>186 deaths per 100,000</b></p> <p>(Data as of July 21, 2021.)</p>	<p><b>0.7 deaths per 100,000</b></p> <p>(Based on 1,141 deaths associated with breakthrough infections and 161,000,000 fully vaccinated individuals in U.S. population as of July 15, 2021.)</p>
<p>Source: John Hopkins University of Medicine  <a href="https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data/mortality">https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data/mortality</a></p>	<p>Source: CDC  <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/health-departments/breakthrough-cases.html">https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/health-departments/breakthrough-cases.html</a></p>

These data indicate that becoming fully vaccinated confers significant COVID-19 survival benefits. Accordingly, if you are currently fully vaccinated, thank you for your courage. If you are not currently fully vaccinated, please consider this data in your decision to seek the vaccination. By getting vaccinated, everyone benefits from your individual commitment to public health!