

BROADCAST-Increased holiday travel represents higher risk for COVID-19, especially for the unvaccinated

Health leaders see a recipe for a post-holiday surge this Thanksgiving and the rest of the holidays. There is a rising number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, combined with the fact that 40% of the population in the U.S. is unvaccinated.

OSF HealthCare Chief Clinical Officer Dr. Stephen Hippler warns those who are not vaccinated face a higher risk if they travel this Thanksgiving or during the holiday season.

“Those who remain susceptible, because they are not vaccinated, really are at a higher risk of not only acquiring COVID-19, but being hospitalized and dying.”(:09)

Dr. Hippler says despite breakthrough cases among the fully vaccinated, the vaccines are doing what they are supposed to – keeping many people out of the hospital.

“The fact of the matter is, we’re not seeing the same degree of hospitalization and death and that’s truly what the vaccines are intended to do – to prevent hospitalization, severe disease and death. And, so far even with the variants, the vaccines we have available have shown to be very effective at preventing hospitalizations and deaths.”(:23)

Because many holiday gatherings are indoors, Dr. Hippler says people need to get vaccinated for COVID-19, as well as for those other preventable illnesses.

“Getting the booster to help boost our immunity for those who are vaccinated, getting the primary series for those who have not, and really getting our kids vaccinated to prevent them from getting sick, us from getting sick, our community from getting sick and spreading it to others.”(:20)

OSF HealthCare leaders say vaccination is the greatest tool to help end the pandemic and urge people before the holidays hit, get to the nearest location where you and your kids can get vaccinated.

“I would recommend that whenever it’s convenient for you, and wherever you can find it – they’re the same vaccine that you get in any community – so find a shot and get the vaccinations you need.”(:17)

OSF HealthCare is holding clinics for 5-11 year olds and you can visit their website, osfhealthcare.org/covid19/vaccines to get an appointment.