

BROADCAST-Fully Vaccinated Still Need to Consider Those Who are Not

The leader of a Peoria, Illinois-based 14 hospital system, OSF HealthCare supports the cautious approach of the latest federal health guidelines for the kinds of activities for fully vaccinated people.

Dr. Stephen Hippler is the chief clinical officer and says more research is needed to see if vaccinated people can still become infected - yet not experience symptoms - and possibly spread the virus to others who have not been vaccinated. Until then, he applauds [the latest updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) which allows fully vaccinated people to gather indoors without masks and social distancing with people who are also fully vaccinated or if people from the same household have low risk of serious illness from the virus.

SOT-Dr. Stephen Hippler, chief clinical officer, OSF HealthCare

“Much is still unknown that now, being smart and being safe is probably the right approach. Even those of us who are fully vaccinated need to look out for others. Again, it’s about protecting others and our community in addition to protecting ourselves.” (:24)

People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after they have gotten their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or two weeks after receiving the single-dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

The CDC warns that everyone — even those who are vaccinated — should continue to follow recommended guidelines in public settings, including wearing masks. Dr. Hippler says with just under 10% of people who have received two doses of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, it’s not time to loosen restrictions any more.

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“Moderate to large-size gatherings, at the gym, other large social venues, the guidelines still apply to wear the mask and physically distance so we’re not spreading it to other people who have not had the opportunity to be vaccinated yet.” (:20)

According to the CDC, even in a small gathering, if there are unvaccinated people who come from multiple households, everyone should wear a well-fitted mask, stay at least 6 feet apart and visit outdoors or in a well-ventilated space.

The guidance still suggests fully vaccinated people get tested and quarantine after a known exposure to someone with COVID-19 if they have symptoms.

The CDC still recommends against unnecessary travel. Dr. Hippler says each individual has to determine for themselves what is necessary for their own mental

health and wellbeing and he suggests checking with individual nursing homes to see if there are any changes to visitation rules because the latest guidance doesn't address long term care facilities.

Some immunologists argue people who've recovered only need one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. But, Dr. Hippler says there's no the research to support that approach.

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“I don't think we ought to be deviating from that (every eligible adult being fully vaccinated) until we have hard, firm data to suggest it's equally safe. Otherwise, it's just a hypothesis.”(:20)

The CDC guidelines for those who are fully vaccinated are interim and Dr. Hippler says they'll continue to evolve as more people are immunized against the virus and its variants, or until more research becomes available to suggest changes.