

# COVID-19 Community Level and COVID-19 Prevention

People who are [up to date on vaccines](#) have much lower risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 compared with unvaccinated people. When making decisions about community prevention strategies and individual preventive behaviors in addition to vaccination, health officials and people should consider the COVID-19 Community Level in the county. Layered prevention strategies — like staying up to date on vaccines, screening testing, ventilation and wearing masks — can help limit severe disease and reduce the potential for strain on the healthcare system. CDC recommends using county COVID-19 Community Levels to help determine which COVID-19 prevention measures to use for individuals and communities.

Some community settings such as schools and some high-risk congregate settings such as correctional facilities and homeless shelters might include additional layers of prevention (e.g., physical distancing, contact tracing) based on information and data about the characteristics of the setting. High-risk congregate settings may implement added prevention as needed in the event of a facility outbreak even if COVID-19 Community Levels in the surrounding community are low. Jurisdictions should monitor health equity in vaccine and other prevention efforts and assess hospitalization data where possible to ensure outreach occurs to address any disparities in access to high quality healthcare. Recommendations based on COVID-19 Community Levels may not apply to [healthcare settings](#) such as hospitals or long-term care facilities.

COVID-19 Community Level	Individual- and household-level prevention behaviors	Community-level prevention strategies (as recommended by state or local authorities)
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters</li> <li>• Maintain improved ventilation throughout indoor spaces when possible</li> <li>• Follow CDC recommendations for isolation and quarantine, including getting tested if you are exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19</li> <li>• If you are immunocompromised or <a href="#">high risk</a> for severe disease               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have a plan for rapid testing if needed (e.g., having home tests or access to testing)</li> <li>- Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you are a candidate for treatments like oral antivirals, PrEP, and monoclonal antibodies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute and administer vaccines to achieve high community vaccination coverage and ensure health equity</li> <li>• Maintain improved ventilation in public indoor spaces</li> <li>• Ensure access to testing, including through point-of-care and at-home tests for all people               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicate with organizations and places that serve people who are immunocompromised or at <a href="#">high risk</a> for severe disease to ensure they know how to get rapid testing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure access and equity in vaccination, testing, treatment, community outreach, support services for disproportionately affected populations</li> </ul>

## Medium

- If you are immunocompromised or [high risk](#) for severe disease
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions (e.g., testing)
  - Have a plan for rapid testing if needed (e.g., having home tests or access to testing)
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you are a candidate for treatments like oral antivirals, PrEP, and monoclonal antibodies
- If you have household or social contact with someone at [high risk](#) for severe disease
  - consider self-testing to detect infection before contact
  - consider wearing a mask when indoors with them
- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters
- Maintain improved ventilation throughout indoor spaces when possible
- Follow CDC recommendations for isolation and quarantine, including getting tested if you are exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19
- Protect people at [high risk](#) for severe illness or death by ensuring equitable access to vaccination, testing, treatment, support services, and information
- Consider implementing screening testing or other testing strategies for people who are exposed to COVID-19 in workplaces, schools, or other community settings as appropriate
- Implement enhanced prevention measures in high-risk congregate settings (see guidance for [correctional facilities](#) and [homeless shelters](#))
- Distribute and administer vaccines to achieve high community vaccination coverage and ensure health equity
- Maintain improved ventilation in public indoor spaces
- Ensure access to testing, including through point-of-care and at-home tests for all people
  - Communicate with organizations and places that serve people who are immunocompromised or at [high risk](#) for severe disease to ensure they know how to get rapid testing
- Ensure access and equity in vaccination, testing, treatment, community outreach, support services for disproportionately affected populations

## High

- Wear a well-fitting mask<sup>1</sup> indoors in public, regardless of vaccination status (including in K-12 schools and other indoor community settings)
- If you are immunocompromised or [high risk](#) for severe disease
  - Wear a [mask or respirator](#) that provides you with greater protection
  - Consider avoiding non-essential indoor activities in public where you could be exposed
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to take other precautions (e.g., testing)
  - Have a plan for rapid testing if needed (e.g., having home tests or access to testing)
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you are a candidate for treatments like oral antivirals, PrEP, and monoclonal antibodies
- If you have household or social contact with someone at [high risk](#) for severe disease
  - consider self-testing to detect infection before contact
  - consider wearing a mask when indoors with them
- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters
- Maintain improved ventilation throughout indoor spaces when possible
- Follow CDC recommendations for isolation and quarantine, including getting tested if you are exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19
- Consider setting-specific recommendations for prevention strategies based on local factors
- Implement healthcare surge support as needed
- Protect people at [high risk](#) for severe illness or death by ensuring equitable access to vaccination, testing, treatment, support services, and information
- Consider implementing screening testing or other testing strategies for people who are exposed to COVID-19 in workplaces, schools, or other community settings as appropriate
- Implement enhanced prevention measures in high-risk congregate settings (see guidance for [correctional facilities](#) and [homeless shelters](#))
- Distribute and administer vaccines to achieve high community vaccination coverage and ensure health equity
- Maintain improved ventilation in public indoor spaces
- Ensure access to testing, including through point-of-care and at-home tests for all people
  - Communicate with organizations and places that serve people who are immunocompromised or at [high risk](#) for severe disease to ensure they know how to get rapid testing
- Ensure access and equity in vaccination, testing, treatment, community outreach, support services for disproportionately affected populations

<sup>1</sup> At all levels, people can wear a mask based on personal preference, informed by personal level of risk. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.