



Public Health Branch
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While we have seen a downward trend over the past several weeks, we are still seeing high levels of community transmission and the CDC Data Tracker reflects this as well. We continue to see higher cases and hospitalizations in individuals that are unvaccinated. While there is a lot to be optimistic about, given our community's efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19, we are still not near pre-surge levels.

Last week two new orders regarding quarantining and outdoor and indoor masking went into effect. While the 14 day quarantine is still the safest option, under the new quarantine guidance, unvaccinated individuals who are a close contact of a COVID-19 case who don't have or develop any symptoms have the option to end their quarantine after seven days from their exposure if they receive a negative result from a test taken on day five or later. With the new masking order released, the outdoor mask requirement was removed and metrics were established for the removal of certain other indoor mask requirements.

On the vaccination front, the Pfizer vaccine is now authorized for ages 5 to 11 and is recommended for children in this age group. For more information or to schedule an appointment, parents should contact their child's health care provider or local pharmacy. Given that this population so recently became eligible, we will provide an update on how many are getting vaccinated as the data becomes readily available.

Along with these new developments for the vaccine, Merck recently applied to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for emergency use authorization of their new pill called molnupiravir. The company is reporting that this new drug treatment cuts the risk of hospitalization and death by half, for patients with mild-to-moderate COVID-19. We continue to see great advancements in medicine to reduce the risk of hospitalization and death from COVID-19. We are grateful for these efforts.

Thank you for everyone coming together to take care of each other. The ingenuity we've seen with creating safe community events, the effort our schools and childcare providers are taking to keep our children safe, and the support of our local businesses, all help us get through this pandemic.



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