

FAQ– SJBPH Public Health Advisory to Limit the Spread of COVID-19

Why is there a Public Health Advisory in place?

The severe and highly transmissible Delta variant of COVID-19 is present in Archuleta and La Plata counties. San Juan Basin Public Health (SJBPH) continues to strongly urge residents to protect themselves through a Public Health Advisory, which can be viewed [here](#). Both La Plata and Archuleta counties fall under ‘High’ transmission according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and some of the highest transmission rates of 2021 have been observed in recent weeks.

The risk of contracting COVID-19 remains high, especially when participating in indoor activities outside of the home. It is extremely important that residents and business owners commit to following San Juan Basin Public Health’s local Public Health Advisory to stay safe and healthy as we enter the cold weather months. This FAQ is written to help you easily understand and follow the current set of strong recommendations in the advisory.

What is a Public Health Advisory?

A Public Health Advisory is a formal set of strong recommendations (directives) provided to a community containing well-documented prevention precautions to keep a community safe from an established public health risk. The Advisory is targeted to both businesses and the general public.

When does this Advisory take effect?

San Juan Basin Public Health has had a local Public Health Advisory in effect since last spring. The version enacted November 12, 2021, is currently in effect and includes the most up-to-date information to keep the community safe and healthy.

Vaccination and Treatments

Am I eligible for a booster shot?

Booster vaccines are authorized and recommended for adults 18 years and older who originally received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine (two months past from receiving the first dose). Boosters are also recommended for those who received a Pfizer or Moderna vaccine and are either 65 years of age and older, OR an adult 18 years or older with a high-risk medical condition or who is high risk of exposure (six months past from receiving the second dose).

On November 10, 2021, Jared Polis, Governor of Colorado, declared the entire state of Colorado high risk for exposure for the purpose of booster shot eligibility. This means that all adults (18+) are eligible for a booster once the two month or 6 month time period has passed.

Will I be required to get vaccinated for work?

As of January 4, 2022, federal regulations will require healthcare at a facility that receives Medicare or Medicaid to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Federal contractors and their employees will also be required to be fully vaccinated, subject to certain exemptions.

On this date, federal regulations will also require private employers who have 100 employees or more to require that all of their employees are fully vaccinated OR get tested for COVID-19 on a weekly basis and wear a mask in the workplace, subject to certain exemptions. More information about the federal regulations is available at [this link](#).

Even if it is not required by federal regulations, employers have the right to require vaccination for employees. Certain exemptions may apply. Additional information is available at [this link](#).

This matter is currently undergoing legal review, and SJBPH will provide updates as they become available.

Can I receive monoclonal antibody treatments?

Monoclonal antibodies are produced to recognize the COVID-19 spike protein and interfere with its ability to infect a cell. Monoclonal antibody treatments are now available in southwest Colorado. These treatments can help prevent severe illness for some people aged 12 years and older who get infected with COVID-19, have mild or moderate symptoms, and are at high risk of developing severe COVID-19 due to age or medical condition. People who meet these criteria should consult their physician for a possible referral for monoclonal antibody therapy.

Learn more about monoclonal antibodies at [this link](#) and treatment eligibility at [this link](#).

Face Coverings and Mitigating Transmission

I am vaccinated, why do I need to wear a mask?

Currently, vaccination alone cannot control the spread of COVID-19. A layered approach is most effective to control infection and prevent hospitalizations and death. This means wearing a mask in all public indoor spaces and businesses, getting tested if exposed, washing hands thoroughly and often, and getting fully vaccinated.

Current research reveals that fully vaccinated people can spread the Delta variant of the virus to others even if they do not show symptoms. Nearly 100% of cases in Colorado in October that underwent variant analysis were the Delta variant. Therefore, extra precautions are needed to keep our communities healthy. Vaccination still provides protection against COVID-19 transmission and infection, but it does not provide 100% coverage. Additional safety precautions, such as masks, are strongly recommended to ensure that you and your family have the best protection available.

Are there any exceptions to the mask recommendation?

SJBPH urges all individuals in Archuleta and La Plata Counties to wear a face covering while in any public indoor space, unless the individual is two years of age or younger, or cannot medically tolerate a face covering.

A full list of situations where masks are not required can be found by clicking [on this link](#).

What else can I do to limit spread other than masking in public indoor spaces?

SJBPH is urging all community members to continue following critical public health precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Learn more about COVID-19 prevention [here](#).

- Practice proper hand hygiene (wash hands for a minimum of 20 seconds.)
- Get vaccinated!
- Get tested if you have any concern about a COVID-19 exposure. If you are unvaccinated, consider regular testing or surveillance testing.
- Quarantine and monitor symptoms if exposure is suspected.
- If gathering with friends and family, meet outdoors when possible.
- Practice social distancing when in a public space and vaccination status is not disclosed (Stay 6 feet from others.)
- Federal mask requirements for public transit, air travel, and other modes of transportation, including taxis and private ride-share like Lyft and Uber, are in effect. To learn more, visit this [link](#).

SJBPH advises residents and visitors to only patronize indoor establishments and special events that adhere to the face covering and physical distancing recommendations in the Public Health Advisory; these places pose less of a risk to your health than places that do not require face coverings or limit capacity to support physical distancing.

Business Owners

How can my business follow the Advisory and help keep the community safe?

Owners, operators, or managers of businesses and other public indoor settings should maintain **physical separation requirements** (at least six feet between households or parties) within their enclosed public spaces. Business owners and administrators of public indoor spaces should limit capacity to allow for adequate space between parties.

SJBPH advises that owners, operators, or managers of a public indoor space should deny service or entry to individuals unless the individual is wearing a face covering, in order to protect workers, customers, and the community.

What steps should I take to keep my employees safe and prevent a COVID-19 outbreak in my workplace?

Widespread vaccination, combined with other mitigation strategies, is the best approach to reduce the burden of disease in our community. SJBPH further advises that establishments and special events should consider requiring employees, customers and/or guests to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, OR to require a recent (less than 48 hours) negative test to be presented on entry by unvaccinated employees, customers, and/or guests. Learn more about workplace vaccination requirements at [this link](#).

SJBPH advises employers and business and event operators to implement the following transmission control measures in public indoor spaces:

- Monitor symptoms in employees at work or at home prior to work.
- Encourage testing among staff.
- If an employee reports COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive, take the following steps:
 - Send employee home immediately. Instruct employee to get tested if they have not done so already.
 - Follow SJBPH guidance for quarantine and isolation, ensuring that the employee does not return to work until the quarantine or isolation period has ended. Learn more [here](#).
 - If five or more employees have COVID-19 symptoms, contact SJBPH and cooperate with outbreak investigators.
 - Provide work arrangements for people at risk of severe COVID-19 sickness, such as telecommuting, until they are fully immunized. When possible, encourage and enable remote work.

All employers in the state, regardless of size, are required to provide a supplement of up to 80 hours of COVID-related leave in 2021, including paid sick leave for getting the COVID-19 vaccine and recovering from side effects that prevent an employee from working. More information on this requirement is available at [this link](#). The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) provides employers with mitigation support in further detail via [this link](#).

My business or event is in full adherence with SJBPH's Public Health Advisory. What are some ways we can advertise this?

Face protection, physical separation, and ventilation are all recommended in this Public Health Advisory. For public indoor places and events, SJBPH urges owners, operators, and managers to comply with the advisory and publicly display signs the agency has developed. For access to this signage, follow [this link](#).

The State of Colorado is encouraging businesses to take the [Power the Comeback/COVID Safe Business Pledge](#) to become an official partner and access the official business partner tool kit. More resources for businesses are available on the [State's website](#).