

Health officials outline COVID-19 testing recommendations for summer season

People who are not fully vaccinated need to continue testing in many instances

Even as Minnesotans continue to push back COVID-19 through vaccination and other measures, health officials today said COVID-19 testing will remain a key tool in the coming months to help Minnesota keep the virus at bay. To underscore this point, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is offering updated guidance for who should get tested and when.

Minnesotans ages 12 and older are eligible to get vaccinated, and they should take advantage of this protection as the best way to end their pandemic worries, Minnesota Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm said. However, with the virus still circulating in communities and many people still susceptible, COVID-19 testing remains an important tool in keeping the virus from spreading to those who are unvaccinated. This is particularly important for those younger than 12, who are not yet eligible for the vaccine.

“Thanks to the nearly 3 million Minnesotans who have been vaccinated, we’ve been able to slow the spread of COVID-19,” Commissioner Malcolm said. “But with variants continuing to circulate, the pandemic is not over, especially if you or your children are not vaccinated yet. That means testing can still be a very important tool.”

The updated MDH guidance includes the following key points:

- People who are not fully vaccinated should get tested if they are in contact with someone who has COVID-19.
- People who are not fully vaccinated should also get tested every two weeks if they have frequent contact with people outside their household, or if they participate in activities where social distancing may not be possible.
- People who are not fully vaccinated should get tested after travel within the U.S.
- Vaccinated or not, anyone who travels internationally should get tested upon returning to Minnesota.

People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose of Pfizer or Moderna, or two weeks after Johnson & Johnson.

“It’s important to remember children younger than 12 are still not eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine and can still be exposed or become sick with COVID-19,” said MDH Assistant Commissioner Dan Huff. “If your kids participate in activities where they may be exposed, or in settings with others outside your household, like day care or youth camps, they should get tested every two weeks.”

COVID-19 testing is free. To find no-barrier community testing sites, visit [COVID-19 Community Testing Sites](#). If you need special accommodations or have accessibility needs, contact the COVID-19 hotline: 1-833-431-2053.

Here are the full testing recommendations:

Symptoms

- People with COVID-19 symptoms should get tested immediately, regardless of vaccination status.

People who are not fully vaccinated

- People who are not fully vaccinated and were in contact with someone who has COVID-19 should get tested at least five days after they were close to the person. NOTE: People who tested positive for COVID-19 within the past three months do not need to get tested as long as they do not develop new symptoms.
- People who are not fully vaccinated and in frequent contact with people outside of their household should get tested **every two weeks**. For example, children and staff in child care or youth camps/programs, unvaccinated adults who work with the public in settings such as retail or food service.
- People who are not fully vaccinated and have taken part in activities that put them at higher risk for COVID-19 because they cannot physically distance as needed to avoid exposure. For example, attending large gatherings or being in crowded or poorly-ventilated indoor settings.

Travel

- People returning from international travel, regardless of vaccination status.
- People who are not fully vaccinated and returning from domestic travel.

Health care

- Health care workers should get tested after domestic travel and after a high-risk exposure, regardless of vaccination status, due to the vulnerable population they serve.

Special circumstances

- People with immunocompromising conditions in consultation with their health care provider.
- People who have been asked or referred to get tested by their health care provider, or state, tribal, local or territorial health department.
- Specific recommendations will be provided in the setting of clusters or an outbreak.
- The updated recommendations can be found under “Who Should Get Tested” on the MDH [COVID-19 Testing](#) webpages.