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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
August 5, 2021

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Johnson County Public Health Updates Masking Recommendation

Johnson County, Iowa – Johnson County Public Health (JCPH) recommends residents and visitors of Johnson County wear masks in public indoor settings, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status. This recommendation is based on the discovery that the Delta variant is more contagious and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) updated recommendation that masks be worn in areas of substantial or high transmission of COVID-19, even by individuals who have been vaccinated, in public indoor settings including schools. The CDC also recommends fully vaccinated people who have come into close contact with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 be tested 3-5 days after exposure, and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test.

Johnson County is currently listed at substantial community transmission on the CDC’s COVID data tracker. The majority of counties in Iowa, including all of the counties surrounding Johnson County, are experiencing high levels of community transmission. While COVID-19 cases in Johnson County have been low for several weeks, unfortunately they have increased, just as they have around the state and the country. JCPH suggests residents and visitors review transmission rates at <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>. Wearing a mask, social distancing, and hand hygiene are easy and effective ways to help keep the spread of COVID-19 and the Delta variant as low as possible. JCPH strongly recommends organizations monitor the level of community transmission and require masks in indoor spaces.

While the rapid spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant is concerning, vaccines provide excellent protection against serious illness and help protect others who are vulnerable to the disease. The best way to keep our community safe and healthy is to ensure that every person aged 12 and over is vaccinated against COVID-19.

In addition, JCPH reminds everyone to stay home if experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms and contact their health care provider to be tested. Symptoms can be similar to those experienced from the common cold or flu, and allergies. For this reason, it is still important to get tested for COVID-19. Symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.

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