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Widespread Voluntary Mask Use Strongly Encouraged as Missoula County Remains in CDC High Risk COVID Category

As Missoula County remains in the CDC's High Risk COVID-19 category, widespread indoor mask use is encouraged for all individuals regardless of vaccination status.

Under the High Risk COVID-19 category the following prevention strategies are recommended by CDC for individuals:

- Wear a well-fitting mask 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

Vaccines, boosters, and therapeutics are also strongly encouraged to help lower Missoula County's COVID-19 hospitalizations and ultimately lower the community's COVID-19 risk level.

All individuals ages 6 months and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccines.

Individuals who fit the following criteria are either eligible for one or two boosters:

- Boosters are approved for ages 5 and older, five months after finishing the primary series of vaccine.
- Individuals ages 50 and older, 12 and older who are immunocompromised and individuals who have had two J&J shots are eligible for second boosters four months

after their last booster.

Residents are strongly encouraged to seek COVID-19 testing as quickly as possible if they start to experience COVID-19 symptoms. This is because COVID-19 therapeutics, Paxlovid and Molnupiravir must be taken within five days of symptoms onset.

Residents should be aware of the following for therapeutics:

- If residents cannot be vaccinated due to medical reasons or because their body can't mount an appropriate immune response to vaccines, they may still be protected with COVID therapeutics.
- Paxlovid and Molnupiravir are oral therapeutics available at some pharmacies in Missoula County. These have been found to be effective against Omicron subvariants and sublineages. These can be used in children and adults who weigh at least 88 pounds, test positive for COVID-19, have mild to moderate symptoms, and are at high risk for progressing to severe disease. These therapeutics must be started within five days of a patient experiencing symptoms.
- Residents can go to [covid.gov](https://www.covid.gov) and put in their zip code to find a test-to-treat site near them.

Vaccine appointments, the therapeutics finder tool and COVID-19 testing locations can all be found on missoulainfo.com.

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mission is to build conditions that support the health
of people, environments, and communities.*