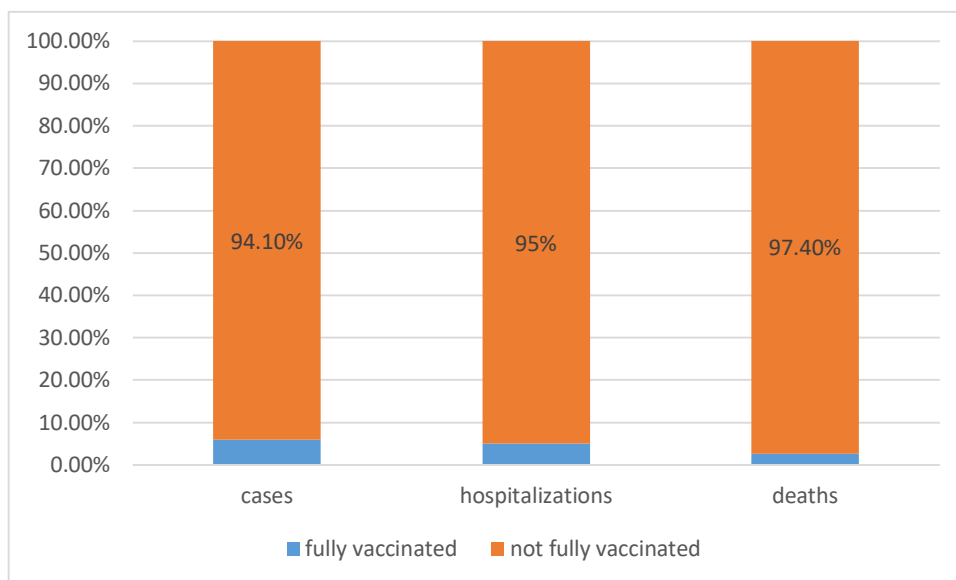


Virus Variants and Vaccination - SARS-CoV-2 Update

Here is the latest information on variants of SARS-CoV-2 and why vaccination and masks continue to be recommended by the American Dental Association (ADA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- ADA and CDC recommendations for dental practice settings remain the same. Mitigation strategies, long recommended by the CDC and ADA, include being vaccinated against the virus, using masks in practice settings, and social distancing.
- Vaccinated individuals can still become infected and transmit the virus to others, even if they don't experience symptoms themselves. As of the end of July 2021, [the Delta variant was reported to be responsible for 82% of the cases in the US.](#)
- Delta is categorized by the CDC as a variant of concern (VOC) because it appears to be more transmissible than previous strains and while it appears less vulnerable to neutralization by post-vaccination antibodies, it is still susceptible to secondary immune responses. Similarly, it seems less vulnerable to control by monoclonal antibody treatment.
- Infection by this strain can be detected earlier after exposure, and is seen to have a higher concentration of viral particles present in infected individuals. This is reflected in the lower Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT PCR) cycles required at diagnosis.
- As of the end of July 2021, the overwhelming majority of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are among individuals who are not fully vaccinated. (see graph below)
- Given the potential of unvaccinated individuals, including children, as well as vaccinated individuals to be infected with and transmit variants of the virus, the CDC recommends everyone 2 years of age or older in areas of substantial or high transmission, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask that covers both nose and mouth when indoors and/or in the presence of crowds of people.



Source: [Kaiser Family Foundation](#)

Additional Resources: [SARS-CoV-2 Variant Classifications and Definitions \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Last Updated: August 9, 2021