



# Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson  
José R. Romero, MD, Secretary of Health

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## Guidance for Face Coverings and Social Distancing

Community spread of COVID-19 has increased significantly within Arkansas over the last month. Therefore, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) updates the following recommendations for how to best prevent transmission of COVID-19.

The Secretary of Health makes the following recommendations regarding wearing face coverings and social distancing. These recommendations are not mandates but are guidance based upon the updated CDC best practices.

People are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, or 2 weeks after a single dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. If you don't meet these requirements, regardless of your age, you are **NOT** fully vaccinated. Keep taking all [precautions](#) until you are fully vaccinated.

### People who are not fully vaccinated

If you are **not** fully vaccinated, you should wear a face covering that fits completely over the mouth and nose and practice social distancing in the following situations:

- In all indoor settings where you are exposed to non-household members and distancing of six (6) or more feet cannot be assured
- In all outdoor settings where you are exposed to non-household members, unless you can maintain a space of six (6) or more feet to practice social distancing
- Any time you are in a public setting, such as in a store
- [Any time you are traveling](#) on a plane, bus, train, or other form of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and while in transportation hubs such as airports and bus or train stations
- When you are around people who do not live with you, including when inside your own home or when inside someone else's home
- When inside your home if someone you live with is sick with [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19

## People who are fully vaccinated

CDC updated their guidance for fully vaccinated individuals on July 27 (click [here](#)) to recommend that fully vaccinated people wear a mask in indoor public settings in areas of “substantial or high transmission”. All areas of Arkansas currently have substantial or high transmission and are likely to remain that way for some time.

CDC’s new guidance also states that “fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission, particularly if they are immunocompromised or at [increased risk for severe disease](#) from COVID-19, or if they have someone in their household who is immunocompromised, at increased risk of severe disease or not fully vaccinated”. Also, keep the following in mind:

- It is still recommended that masks should still be worn by all in healthcare facilities.
- Fully vaccinated people should also continue to wear a well-fitted mask in correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and other congregate living situations.
- Fully vaccinated people should not visit private or public settings if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in the prior 10 days or are experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- Individuals who are fully vaccinated should continue to follow [CDC travel guidance](#) and any applicable workplace or school guidance related to personal protective equipment use or SARS-CoV-2 testing.
- Given the likelihood that most public settings will include both fully vaccinated people and those who are not fully vaccinated, businesses and other entities may choose to require that everyone in their establishment wear a mask. Such precautions are made with the intention to protect all.

If you have a condition or are taking a medication that weakens your immune system, you may NOT be fully protected even if you are fully vaccinated. Talk to your healthcare provider. Even after vaccination, you may need to continue taking all precautions.

The following people should **not** wear a face covering:

- Children under 2 years of age
- People with a health condition or disability who cannot safely wear a face covering, for reasons related to the health condition or disability
- People performing job duties where a six (6) foot distance is not achievable, but a mask is inhibitory to the ability to safely and effectively perform the job duty

A face covering completely covering the mouth and nose can be purchased commercially. It should have an ASTM rating of at least Level 1. Homemade using at least two layers of material are also acceptable. Please see [CDC Guidance for Wearing Masks](#) for more information. Masks with valves are not recommended. Bandanas and single-layer neck gaiters (a form of mask made out of stretchy, moisture-wicking fabric that is worn around the neck and pulled up over the nose and mouth) may not provide sufficient protection and are strongly discouraged. Bandanas and gaiters may be doubled to provide two layers of protection. Simple plastic face shields worn without a mask are not considered to be mask substitutes. Masks with sewn-in clear plastic

windows or clear plastic masks that seal around nose and chin, such as those utilized by those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing or when seeing lip movements is important, are acceptable.