



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 19, 2021

Recording of today's call

A video recording can be found at <https://www.scottcountyiowa.com/health/covid19/news>

Delta variant more than twice as infectious — cases growing rapidly

Remarks from Dr. Louis Katz, medical director, Scott County Health Department

1. Delta is *more* than twice as infectious as prior variants and driving markedly increased rates of infection, illness, hospitalization especially in areas with low vaccine use.
 - a. The local rate of infections is more than 10 times higher than before the Fourth of July.
 - b. Hospital admissions have increased markedly nationwide and locally
 - c. Clinical capacity is already exceeded in Florida, Texas, and across the South generally.
 - d. Evidence that immunized people are having vaccine breakthrough infections has emerged.
 - i. Breakthroughs are both expected and important. The current evidence says vaccination still reduces the risk of infection by 50-60% (around or above 70% for prior variants)
 - ii. Large majority of people with breakthroughs who have been vaccinated do not get sick and require care.
 - iii. Nationwide most hospitalizations are among the unvaccinated.
2. Delta is the current variant; it is not the last.
 - a. Their emergence and their impacts are not predictable except that with more infections come more variants
 - b. Immunization, which continues to reduce infection rates, is the best way to prevent emergence of variants.
 - i. Additional doses will be needed for those who do not respond well to the primary series (the immunocompromised especially)
 - ii. Boosters will be recommended for everyone starting in late September (pending FDA clearance), given early evidence of the duration for which the current vaccines provide protection from illness and hospitalization.

- iii. Reformulated vaccines to address variants may be required.
 - c. Find your shot at [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)
 - d. The Scott County Health Department offers walk-in clinics Monday-Friday daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine will be administered. Anyone is welcome, regardless of where they live.
3. Masking of all in indoor spaces and social distancing while we increase vaccination is the needed to protect:
 - a. Health care capacity
 - b. Those who cannot be immunized or who do not respond well to vaccine
 - c. My shot is to protect you, your shot is to protect me.

3rd dose clinics start next week for immunocompromised patients

Remarks from Nita Ludwig, administrator of the Rock Island County Health Department

Starting next week, the Rock Island County Health Department will offer third vaccine doses to severely immunocompromised people, as recommended by both the CDC and the Illinois Department of Public Health. The Moderna vaccine is given each Tuesday, and Pfizer is offered on Fridays at the health department, 2112 25th Ave., Rock Island. Hours are 9-noon and 1-4 p.m. both days.

Two important notes:

- Severely immunocompromised patients must bring their vaccination card with them to receive their third dose.
- Qualifying patients also can receive their third dose from any provider, not just the health department. To find your shot, visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

At this time, only people who meet the following criteria will be offered the third dose:

- Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last two years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response

Patients should talk to their healthcare provider about their medical condition and whether getting an additional dose is appropriate for them.

At this time, the health department and our healthcare and pharmacy are not offering third doses to people outside of the above criteria. The CDC announced this week that third vaccine doses for the general population should begin in September. General population patients should receive their third dose eight months after the second dose. The health departments and our health care partners are working on plans for this next phase in the vaccination effort and will share information through these briefings, media partners, and on our social media pages when plans are finalized.

These third shots only apply to mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, not the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Medical studies are ongoing to find out whether a booster shot will increase protection with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Our top priority remains staying ahead of the virus and protecting our residents from COVID-19 with safe, effective, and long-lasting vaccines. This virus is constantly changing, and we are following the science. Vaccines remain the most powerful tool we have against COVID-19. If you haven't been vaccinated yet, you should get vaccinated right away. Almost all the cases of severe disease, hospitalization, and death continue to occur among those not yet vaccinated.

Other speakers did not talk from prepared remarks

- Dr. Kurt Andersen, senior vice president of physician operations and chief medical officer at Genesis Health System
- Robert Erickson, chief operating officer, UnityPoint Health – Trinity
- Dr. Nathan Durick, president of UnityPoint physicians

More information

- www.TogetherQC.com
- coronavirus.iowa.gov
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinedata?county=Rock%20Island>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=2>

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