

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Delta Variant FAQs

Updated 8/2/2021

What are variants?

Viruses constantly change through mutations, which are expected to occur. New variants consist of one or more mutations in the virus. In COVID-19, various variants of this virus have already been identified. Some of these variants are more easily transmitted, and some can severely affect people's health. For example, if COVID-19 were a tree, the different variants would be the branches. Most of the time variants go away and don't make an impact. Other times they affect vaccine effectiveness, transmission, severity, and treatment- that's when they become "concerning."ⁱ

What variants are being tracked in California?

Currently, the 4 most common variants in CA that are being tracked and monitored are Alpha (B.1.17), Beta (B.1351), Gamma (P1), and Delta (B.1.617.2).

What is a variant of concern and what is a variant of interest?

Certain variants are being monitored because they have shown characteristics that puts them into the category of "variant of concern" such as, if they affect vaccine effectiveness, transmission rates, severity of illness, and if they are resistant to treatment. If they are a new variant, and their public health impact is unknown, they are a "variant of interest."ⁱⁱ

What variants of concern are circulating in Napa County?

There are three variants of concern in Napa County. These are the Alpha, Gamma, and Delta variants. Both Alpha and Delta variants can spread more rapidly. A reflection of how easily the Delta variant can spread, is in the transmission rates that spiked in California from 2% in April to 82% in July.ⁱⁱⁱ

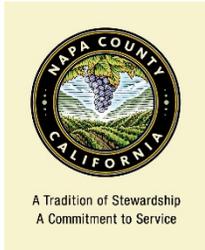
Will the vaccine protect me against the variants?

Research suggests the vaccines are slightly less effective against the variants. Research from the UK indicates the Pfizer vaccine is 88% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 caused by the Delta variant. Early studies of the Moderna vaccine suggests that it is 72% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID by the Delta variant.^{iv} Studies continue to take place to test the effectiveness of all three FDA approved vaccines against these variants. More will be shared as information becomes available.

Vaccination is still recommended as the vaccine can protect you from severe symptoms, complications and prevent transmission. For vaccination information please visit: [COVID-19 Vaccination | Napa County, CA \(countyofnapa.org\)](https://www.countyofnapa.org/COVID-19-Vaccination) or call 707-253-4540.

Will a third (or booster) shot protect me from the Delta Variant?

Most who have been vaccinated are protected from the variants. In a joint statement from the CDC and the FDA released July 18th, 2021, they formally noted, "Americans who have been fully vaccinated do not need a booster shot at this time." The CDC continues to discuss the necessity of booster shots in older people and immunocompromised people. One U.S. study observed that 44% of breakthrough infections were among



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people who were immunocompromised.^v Studies are in progress to make a determination if booster shots will be needed in certain groups, such as older people and immunocompromised individuals. To protect our families and friends it is important to use all the tools we have like masking, social distancing, and hand washing to ensure that our elderly and immunocompromised are safe.

If a vaccinated person gets the COVID-19 Delta variant, can they spread the virus to someone else?

Early data suggest that breakthrough Delta infections are transmissible in people that are fully vaccinated.^{vi} It is possible for fully vaccinated people to transmit the virus to others, although at this time experts are still gathering more information about transmission rates from fully vaccinated persons to others. Vaccines have still been proven to prevent severe illness and death, even though breakthrough cases can happen, the vaccine still offers adequate protection from COVID-19.^{vii} The CDC suggests testing for vaccinated individuals who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, and recommends they isolate if they test positive for COVID-19.

What is Napa County Public Health doing to prepare for the Delta Variant?

Napa County Public Health has recommended that all residents wear masks in indoor settings, regardless of vaccination status. Napa County is offering specific testing for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 and tracking variants. Additionally, we are continuing to do case investigation and contact tracing on all COVID-19 cases in our county.

What should our community do to stop the spread of variants?

The best way to prevent COVID-19 variants is to get vaccinated and to wear a mask in public indoor spaces or crowded outdoor locations. If you have a weakened immune system or underlying medical problems, we strongly advise you wear masks and continue to practice social distancing. Get tested, regardless of vaccination status, if you have symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19. For testing locations in Napa County visit: [Testing Locations | Napa County, CA \(countyofnapa.org\)](https://www.countyofnapa.org/2739/Coronavirus-COVID-19) or call: 707-253-4540.

For more information, please visit: www.countyofnapa.org/2739/Coronavirus-COVID-19 or call: 707-253-4540.

ⁱ Tracking Variants, California Department of Public Health, 07/22/2021, [Tracking Variants \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Tracking-Variants.aspx)

ⁱⁱ Tracking Variants, California Department of Public Health, 07/22/2021, [Tracking Variants \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Tracking-Variants.aspx)

ⁱⁱⁱ Tracking Variants, California Department of Public Health, 07/22/2021, [Tracking Variants \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Tracking-Variants.aspx)

^{iv} COVID 19 Variants: What's the concern?, Mayo Clinic, 07/15/2021, [COVID-19 variants: What's the concern? - Mayo Clinic](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/immunization-vaccination/expert-answers/covid-19-variants/faq-20210715)

^v Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination, CDC, Updated 07/27/2021, [Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/science/briefs/covid-19/vaccines-and-vaccination/)

^{vi} Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination, CDC, Updated 07/27/2021, [Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/science/briefs/covid-19/vaccines-and-vaccination/)

^{vii} Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination, CDC, Updated 07/27/2021, [Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/science/briefs/covid-19/vaccines-and-vaccination/)