

With 73% of the population behind on COVID-19 vaccination, Seattle-King County health officials recommend indoor masking

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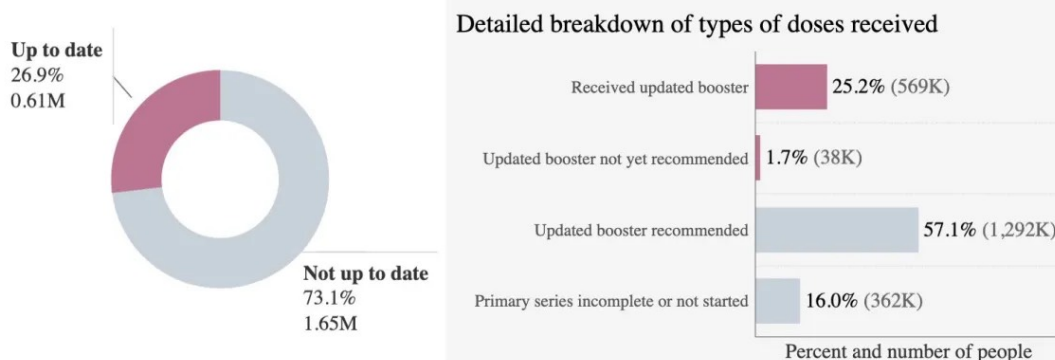
Seattle and King County leaders have joined health officials across the state in calling for people to mask indoors as COVID and other respiratory viruses are running rampant heading into the holiday season and winter.

“Communities across our state and around the U.S. are experiencing an unprecedented surge in viral respiratory illnesses, including respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), influenza and COVID-19,” the statement from **Seattle and King County Public Health** reads. “As health officers and health care leaders working to improve the health of Washington residents, we recommend that everyone wear a high-quality, well-fitting mask when around others in indoor spaces to protect against both acquiring and spreading these infections to others.”

The result is a lot of coughing and sneezing in the world right now pretty much everywhere you go or who you are with from groups of high school kids on the bus to the line at the QFC.

What percent of residents are currently up to date on vaccination against COVID-19?

You are **up to date** with your COVID-19 vaccines when you have received all doses in the primary series and all boosters recommended for you (as of CDC guidance on 10/12/22).



Source: Summary of COVID-19 vaccination among King County residents

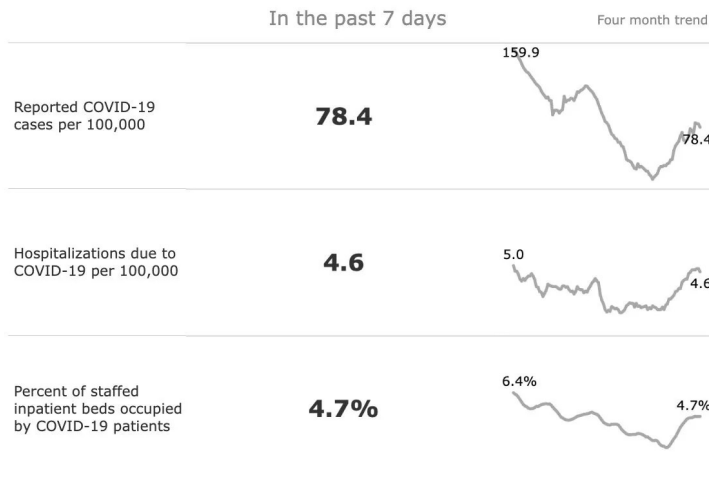
The county says, in addition to RSV and influenza, new COVID-19 variants are also a concern as “immunity from past vaccination is waning for many people who have not yet received an updated booster shot.”

Officials are urging people to keep up on their vaccinations, “the most important way to protect against severe influenza and COVID-19 infections.” The county says an estimated 84% of King County residents have completed the primary COVID-19 vaccination process but only 65% received the original booster and around 31% received an updated booster. The result is only about 27% of the population is considered up to date on their COVID-19 vaccination. Getting a flu shot is also highly recommended.

In King County, you are nearly three times as likely to become sick with COVID if you are not boosted, and seven times as likely to end up hospitalized.

In addition to the indoor masking recommendations and ramping up the call for vaccinations, officials remind people they should be “staying home from work and school and testing for COVID-19 if you develop symptoms.”

The current COVID-19 community level in King County is **Low**



Due to issues with data reporting, case and hospitalization data are incomplete for October 2022. WA DOH and PHSKC are working to resolve this issue promptly.
 Updated: Thursday, December 8, 2022

WHAT IS A COVID-19 COMMUNITY LEVEL?

<p>Low Limited impact on healthcare system, low levels of severe illness</p>	<p>Medium Some impact on healthcare system, more people with severe illness</p>	<p>High High potential for healthcare system strain; high level of severe illness</p>
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The renewed concerns over vaccinations and indoor masking come after Seattle in October joined cities across the nation in ending its official

COVID-19 state of emergency after nearly 1,000 days. Through the pandemic starting in early 2020, Capitol Hill residents and businesses have been under phases of new restrictions and requirements including social distancing, mask, and vaccination mandates as officials tried to fine tune the public response to slowing the spread of the virus. Statewide COVID-19 indoor mask requirements were lifted in March 2022. For now, the new calls for masking are recommendations, not requirements.

The latest reports show the current COVID-19 transmission in King County remains officially at a “low” level but related hospitalizations nearing levels from late summer after dipping this fall. Officials say they are concerned hospitals and health providers are again reaching a point where any new major surges could be disasters and that increased viral illnesses are already having an impact on attendance at schools and in the workplace.